RAMBLES IN DEVON

J. H. WADE

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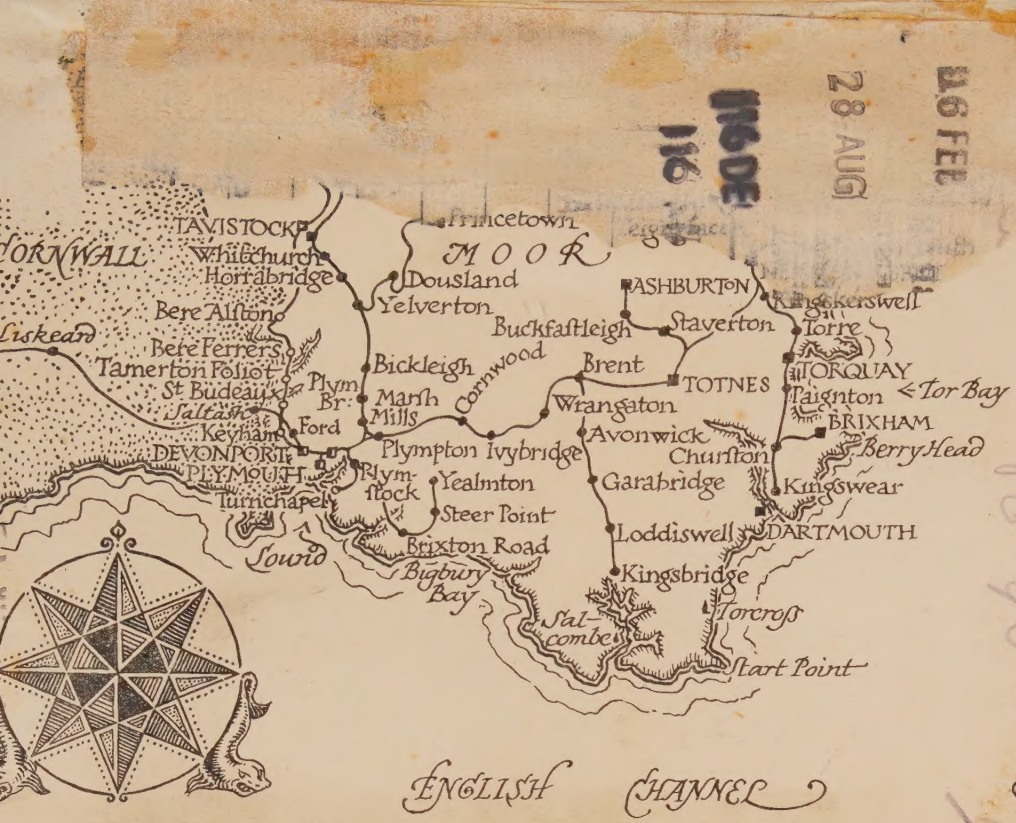

A MAP OF THE RAILWAYS OF DEVONSHIRE

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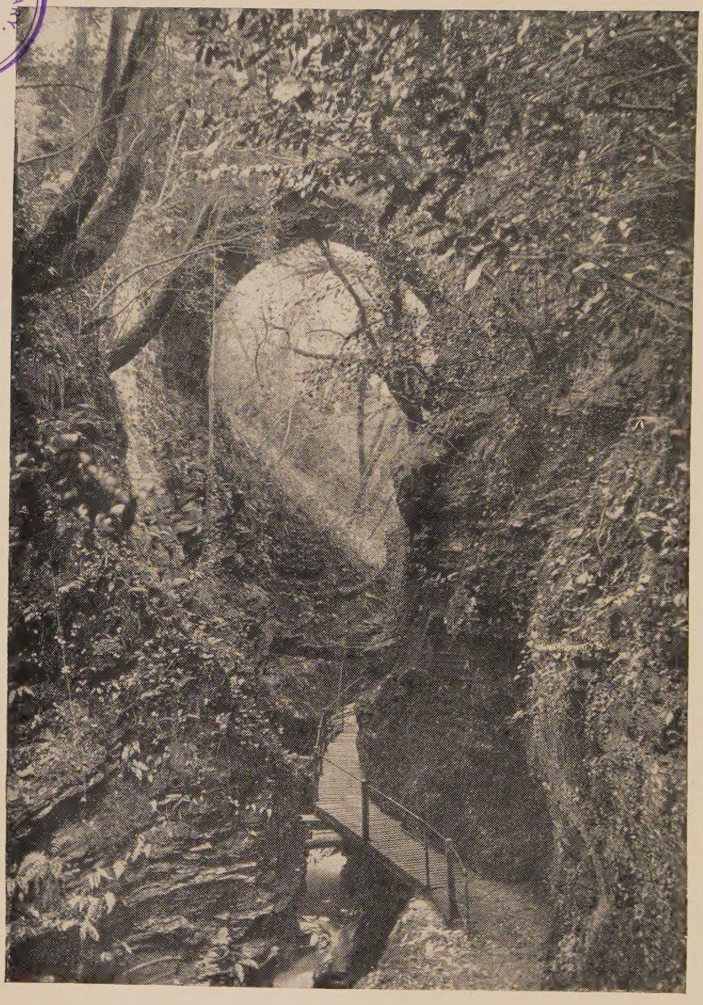

LYDFORD GORGE

RAMBLES IN DEVON

BY

J. H. WADE, M.A.

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PREFACE

HAVING already written on Somerset and Cornwall, I thought that I should like to complete the triology of West Country Rambles by a book on Devon. I was desirous, moreover, of paying a tribute to the county which in my youth was frequently my summer playground and which in my later years has become my place of residence. In compiling this volume, however, I have not relied merely on old recollections. I have recently traversed the shire on foot from end to end and from shore to shore. I have kept no record of the mileage accomplished, but I know that it is not to be measured by the size of the book. Many long tramps have gone to the making of a paragraph, some have been summed up in a single sentence and of several there is no record at all. Good wine needs no bush. I have not thought it necessary to devote much space to eulogizing scenes the beauty of which is universally acknowledged. I have contented myself therefore with the less showy but more serviceable task of providing the tourist with a catalogue of the chief things which he may expect to see when he sets out to visit the 'glorious' shire. Want of space has necessitated many omissions, but I do not think that I have perpetrated many gross blunders. Yet as the area to be described is so large and the objects of interest are so numerous, some confusion of mind and lapse of memory has perhaps occasionally been inevitable. As for originality, if I have here and there stolen other people's thunder, I have (so to speak) only used it to enhance the stage effects.

After all, the play's the thing, and the play as here

presented is my own arrangement. I have not written for Devonshire people, to whom everything is familiar, but for the stranger within their gates who will naturally want to know all that there is to be said on the subject.

J. H. WADE

BISHOPSTEIGNTON
S. DEVON
January 1930

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Hail thou, my native soil : thou blessed plot
Whose equal all the world affordeth not.
Show me, who can, so many crystal rills,
Such sweet-clothed valleys and aspiring hills :
Such wood-ground, pastures, quarries, wealthy mines,
Such rocks in which the diamond fairly shines.
And if the earth can show the like again,
Yet will she fail in her sea-ruling men,
Time never can induce men to o'ertake
The fames of Grenville, Davis, Gilbert, Drake
Or worthy Hawkins, or of thousands more
That by their deeds extolled the Devon shore.

W. Browne

RAMBLES IN DEVON

CHAPTER I

'GLORIOUS DEVON'

For as upon this beach we stand,
And o'er our heads the sea fowls flit,
Our eyes behold a glorious land,
And soon shall ye be kings of it.

WILLIAM MORRIS

IT has become customary in these hustling days, when people gather their impressions chiefly from headlines and pictures, for the railway companies to seek to arrest the attention of the hesitating holiday-maker by attaching to a locality a label intended to crystallize its characteristics. In the flamboyant phraseology of the railway posters Devonshire is 'Glorious Devon'. A label requires a certain amount of appropriateness to stick. The fact that the title, notwithstanding its grandiloquence, has become something of a catchword with the travelling public is a sufficient testimony to its suitability.

But Devonshire is as great as it is glorious:

For all is simply great that meets the eye,
The precipice, the ocean, and the sky.

The mere physical greatness of Devon is not generally appreciated. It is indeed a spacious land. In area it is the third biggest county in England, for it is surpassed in size only by Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It covers some 2,600 square miles. Compared with its immediate neighbours it is immense. It is two and a half times as big as

Dorset, it is twice the size of Cornwall, and it is half as large again as Somerset. It is well, therefore, for the tourist who contemplates paying it a visit to realize at the outset how large an amount of ground he will have to traverse to make its intimate acquaintance. Though, on the whole, it is rather thinly populated, the population in the rural and cultivated areas is fairly evenly distributed. The number of localities to be visited is accordingly considerable.

When faced with these facts the reader's first impulse will be that of Lord Melbourne when he was appointed Colonial Secretary, to get out a map 'to see where all the d—— places are'. Three-quarters of the county, however, only have been brought under cultivation, but even the untilled wastes cannot be ignored, for they contain some of the most striking scenery in the shire, and form one of its most fascinating features.

Devonshire is generally admitted to be the most beautiful county in England.

> Thick with trees and hamlets studded, and with streams and vapours gay,
> Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast the landscape lay.

This beauty of 'wood and stream and hill and ocean' is as evenly spread as the population. In so large an area one would naturally expect to find here and there uninteresting tracts of territory; but there are few dull districts in Devon. There are no 'dead levels lying forth open and empty with nothing to break their monotony save perhaps a thin line of trees or a faint church spire against the sky'. On all sides one is confronted with

> The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
> The pomp of groves, the garniture of fields,
> All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields.

Its beauty is everywhere consistently sustained, and its

charms are of extraordinary variety. Its position between two seas, its great length of shore-line, and the undulating surface of the interior combine to endow it with unrivalled diversity of feature, whilst its possession of the great central upland of Dartmoor makes it unique. So varied are its physical characteristics that it presents in places the most abrupt contrasts both in scenery and climate. This is to some extent popularly recognized. An imaginary line is generally drawn from the east to the west, dividing the county into two distinct spheres, the North and the South. Though North and South Devon differ considerably in character, they have, nevertheless, certain corresponding features, and, so to speak, an underlying family likeness. Each has its own seaboard, each is bisected by a broad central estuary, and each has its own highland region. But the contrasts are more striking than the similarities. The north has a wild and windy coast, fringed by dark and precipitous cliffs, whose frowning continuity is interrupted by one long and almost unbroken stretch of sandy shore. Such towns and villages as the coast possesses snuggle, for the most part, into combes or seclude themselves in the river valleys. It is to a large extent a treeless expanse of steeply swelling downs, whose beauty lies in their boldness and grandeur. The south coast, on the contrary, is a suave, well-sheltered land of 'airy cliffs and glittering sands', luxuriantly wooded, indented with sunny coves and girdled with fashionable watering-places. Besides the differences between the north and the south coasts, there is the striking contrast between the cultivated lands of the interior and the desolate expanses of Dartmoor and Exmoor. And even these inhospitable regions have little in common except their wildness and remoteness. Exmoor is a land of billowy and grassy hills, covered only on its outskirts with gorse and heather, and dimpled with smooth valleys. Dartmoor is 'a tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops' crowned with rocky crests like ruined castles. Its endless expanse of 'braken green and cold grey stone' is

cleft everywhere with deep gorges through which mountain streams rattle down boulder-strewn channels.

> There the peal of swelling torrents fills
> The sky-roof'd temples of the eternal hills,
> While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
> Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.

The country-side of Devonshire, on the contrary, is ' a land made blithe with plough and harrow ', where the sky ' domes the red-ploughed hills with loving blue '. It is a rolling and luxuriant tract of woodland, cornfield and pasture, gay with orchards, and bright with twinkling homesteads ; whilst its leafy lanes have become proverbial for their picturesqueness. What an American journalist said of the country-side of England generally, may be said of that of Devonshire in particular : ' It is not merely so many square miles of ground covered with trees and grass crops, but a distinct experience, something with a character of its own ; a matter of colours and atmosphere.' Or as an old lady more simply declared : ' The scenery is so fine that the cattle stop feeding to look at it.'

Devon owes its beauty chiefly to the multitude of its rivers. It is a land of many waters. So numerous are its streams that the Devonshire people seem to have been hard put to it to find different names for them all. When their stock of words ran out they had to use the same names over again. There are three Darts, two Lews, and no less than six Yeos ; whilst Exe, Axe, and Oke seem all to be variations of the original word ' Usk ' by which the Celts designated water, and ' Tavy ' is said to be a corruption of ' Taw Vichan ' or little Taw. The rivers are not large, but they are lovely. They atone for their want of copiousness by their capriciousness, and they broaden out into wide and winsome estuaries ' shining like silver sheets '. But the service done to the sightseer by the rivers is not limited to their share in ' glorifying the landscape '. They have been the tools with which Nature has sculptured the smoothly

swelling hills and sinuous valleys so characteristic of Devonshire scenery. 'We catch for a moment the powers at play' when we see these mobile chisels 'with many a curve fretting their banks', and here and there gaining 'a painful inch' on their way to where the hammer-blows of the sea have breached the cliffs for their passage. It is to this combination of 'vales that teem with fruits' and 'romantic hills whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills', that Devonshire owes so much of its changeful charm.

Then, again, there are 'the forests ancient as the hills enfolding sunny spots of greenery'. The witchery of the Devonshire woodlands is as fascinating and universal as the magic of its mountains, its meadows, and its murmuring rills. The course of the wayfarer is everywhere 'graced with social trees'. Woods 'belt the grey hill-sides' and drape the gorges of 'the leaping streams'. The visitor can 'lie buried in woods' or

> Sit on rocks to muse on flood and fell,
> And slowly trace the forest's shady scene;

and amid 'these sweet oracles of woods and dells' he can find himself 'at the heart of things'.

The least picturesque district in the county is the clayey moorland which forms the north-western corner of the shire. It is a rather cheerless and windswept plateau, where

> The mountains soar not holding high in heaven
> Their mighty kingdoms, but all downward driven
> Seem shrunken haggard ridges running low;

but even this unsheltered region has a certain sombre severity not unpleasing to a lover of nature in her less chastened moods. Here the eye, sated with softer and more seductive scenes,

> Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints,
> And clouds slow varying their huge imagery;

whilst the ear can find a melancholy pleasure in ' the fitful sweep of winds across the steep ' and in the thunder of the surf upon the shore. Moreover, it must be remembered that besides these minor consolations which it affords, this treeless plateau provides the visitor with some of the finest coastal scenery in the county. Its cliffs and combes are of extraordinary impressiveness. For picturesqueness few seascapes are comparable with the view of Clovelly cushioned in woods and running like a little white step-ladder down to the sea. It is one of the most famous ' glories ' of ' Glorious Devon ' ; whilst the district round Hartland is as notable for the savage grandeur of its cliff-girt shore.

Then there are the wild flowers for which Devon is equally famed. They ' cover broadly the broad land ', but they do not make their appearance as prematurely as is generally imagined, and under the invasion of the towns they are rapidly tending to disappear. The catalogue of Devonshire's wild flowers is almost endless.

> Plants that hourly change
> Their blossoms, through a boundless change
> Of intermingling hues,

clothe the forest, the field, and ' the shaggy steeps ' of the moors. Besides their pictorial charm the flowers of Devonshire possess considerable botanical interest. The diversity of physical conditions produces a flora of great variety. The moorland, the dunes, and cliffs of the sea-board as well as the rural districts have each their own peculiar species, and many rare specimens are to be found amongst them.

Devon is not only a fair but also a fertile land. It is as wealthy as it is wide, and it has everywhere the cheerful aspect of mellow domesticity. To quote old Fuller's trite but quaint conceit—' To her has been given Benjamin's mess as well as Joseph's many-coloured coat.' Devon has

been termed 'the garden of England'. Its early eulogists used to praise it as 'a self-sufficing land', for it supplied its own requirements either by the produce of its fields or by the merchandise of its harbours. 'A thousand waves of wheat ripple' over the land; orchards blossom round 'the sleeping farms', which echo with 'the live-long bleat of thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds',

> An' cows in water to their knees
> Do stand a whisking off the vlees.

The farmer seems not unmindful of the harmonies, as well as of the utilities of nature. The red Devon cattle tone with the ruddy soil on which they are reared, and the Dartmoor sheep are scarcely distinguishable from the granite boulders among which they browse. An old Devonshire farmer, on paying a visit to a Wiltshire cattle-fair, after gazing in astonishment at the variegated stock exposed to view, remarked to a dealer: 'You'm holding a vlower show I do reckon, or be these beasties only camel-flaged as posies? Our Devonsher bullicks be as red as their own mate.' To the peripatetic tourist the fatness of the land is chiefly manifested in the junkets and clotted cream provided for his delectation. Out of doors he cannot help being struck by the amount of waste ground which he sees around him. Not only are there the vast wildernesses of Dartmoor and Exmoor, but everywhere in the course of his rambles he comes across large tracts of common, either imperfectly reclaimed or still flaunting their unfruitfulness defiantly in the farmer's face.

One of the least satisfactory features of the county is its weather. Devon is undeniably wet, though the rainfall varies considerably. The moisture-laden winds sweep up from the sea, and their vapours, condensed by the hills, are precipitated copiously on the unfortunate traveller. The flanks of Dartmoor are the wettest parts of the county, whilst the moor itself is as often as not shrouded in

impenetrable mists. The climate does not deserve all the praise that is bestowed upon it. As proved by statistics, it is on the whole equable, but the mildness of the Devonshire winters is a myth. Statistical tables provide but cold comfort when the thermometer for several days together sullenly stands somewhere in the neighbourhood of zero. Plumbers' bills are more convincing than meterological records. Even in summer all sorts of temperatures are experienced within the bounds of the shire : much depends upon the shelter afforded by the locality. To quote W. E. Norris, the novelist, who was a resident in 'Sunny Salcombe' : 'The most that can be said of Devon is that it is slightly warmer than elsewhere.'

The antiquary will find Devon of absorbing interest. Dartmoor in particular teems with prehistoric relics of one kind or another, but they lie mostly on the pathless surface of the moor and are difficult to find. The Devonshire churches as a rule are large and handsome, and many are noted for their splendid screenwork. There are not many ruined monasteries surviving, and castles are comparatively few ; but there are a number of fine old mansions and manor-houses scattered about the county.

Devonshire is especially rich in historical and personal associations. The recorded history of Devon did not, however, begin early ; but of its unwritten history there are abundant traces. Its first human inhabitants were apparently dwellers on the seaboard ; they were not sailors but cave men. In Kent's cavern near Torquay, in the caves around Brixham, and in the Catterdown quarries at Plymouth have been found the remains of palaeolithic people, perhaps survivors of the interglacial period. Devonshire folk seem to have sprung from a mingled Iberian and Celtic race, who subsequently dwelt chiefly on the hills and reared the earthworks and rude stone memorials which abound on the moors. The Romans came to Devon, but they did not apparently penetrate the county very deeply. They had a station at Exeter, and

one of their roads is supposed to have reached the Teign. After the departure of the legions a flourishing Romano-British kingdom continued to exist in the district until the tenth century, for though the Saxons spread westwards and mingled with the earlier inhabitants, they did not conquer Devon until Athelstan in 926 drove the Britons across the Tamar. The Danes, however, ravaged the coast and sailed up the rivers half a century earlier, and more than once captured Exeter.

At the Norman Conquest William I laid hands on the cathedral city and parcelled out the county amongst his followers. There was fighting again in Devon during Stephen's struggle for the crown. In the reign of Edward III the shire came into prominence as one of our great maritime assets, for it contributed more ships to the king's naval campaigns against the French than any other county in the kingdom. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries our traditional foe made frequent reprisals by raiding some of the Devonshire seaports. The peace of the county was also to some extent disturbed by civil revolts. Devonshire as a whole took but small part in the Wars of the Roses, though some of the nobility were active partisans. A good deal of popular sympathy was, however, shown with the Cornish rising of 1497 and with Perkin Warbeck's attempt to secure the crown in the following year. The most violent outbreak against royal authority was the Western Counties rebellion of 1549 over the enforced changes of the Reformation, which had its birth and received its death-blow on Devonshire soil. The great epoch of Devonshire's maritime history was the reign of Elizabeth, when the leading explorers and sea-captains were Devon men. It was the sea-dogs of Devon who struck terror into the hearts of the Spaniards by their exploits on the Spanish main, and who put an end to the dream of Spanish domination by shattering the Armada in 1588. In the great Civil War of the seventeenth century, fighting was general over the whole of the county, but there were few pitched

battles. The attacks were chiefly on towns and country houses. As far as Devon was concerned the war came virtually to an end by the fall of Barnstaple and Torrington, which were captured by Fairfax in 1646 ; though there was a belated revival of it when Penruddock in 1655 raised the standard of Prince Charles at South Molton, only to suffer defeat. The county as a whole had sided with Parliament, but it was a Devonshire man, General Monk, who brought about the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. A large number of churches have the royal arms emblazoned on their walls in commemoration of the return of the Stuarts to the throne. The county again showed its democratic leanings in the welcome it gave to the Prince of Orange, who landed at Brixham in 1688 and first published his Declaration at Newton Abbot. It is said that the avenues of firs and limes frequently met with in the shire were rival exhibitions of local feeling for the Scotch and Dutch claimants of the crown.

A wealth of personal associations clings to Devonshire. The great sea-kings—Drake, the Hawkinses, Raleigh, the two Gilberts, and Sir Richard Grenville, who moved so grandly through ' the spacious days of Great Elizabeth ' were Devon men. The queen, who loved a bold man with a spice of gallantry in his composition, declared that the Devonshire squires were ' all born courtiers, with a becoming confidence ', and self-reliance was always a distinguishing characteristic of the sons of the shire who rose to eminence. In John Churchill Devon gave to the nation its greatest soldier. To literature it added the names of William Browne, Gay and Coleridge the poets, Peele and Ford the dramatists, and Charles Kingsley the novelist. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Northcote, and Prout the painters were born in Devonshire. Jewel and Hooker the theologians and Newcomen the inventor were likewise natives. These are only a few of the Devonians whose achievements in varied walks of life have shed lustre on the land of their birth. The calendar of Devonshire celebrities is long and illustrious,

and these names are selected almost at random to show that Devon has been as productive of great men as it is distinguished for beautiful scenery, and that the traditions of the shire are not the least of its many titles to fame or the smallest of its many claims upon the attention of the tourist.

Delightful land, in wildness e'en benign,
The glorious past is ours, the future thine.

CHAPTER II

THE VALLEY OF THE CULM

> The rich vale that eastward lay
> Waited the wakening touch of day
> To give its woods and cultured plain
> And towers and spires to life again.
>
> SCOTT

AS has already been hinted, the tourist who sets out to make himself acquainted with Devonshire will not only be astonished at the vastness of the territory which he has to explore, but will find himself embarrassed by the richness and variety of his programme. The county is so full of good things that he will not know where to begin his rambles. A commonly accepted maxim with old-fashioned whist players when they held a good hand and did not know with what to lead off was, ' When in doubt play trumps.' If there is any virtue in an analogy, the hesitating traveller might do worse than lead off with Exeter, for it is undoubtedly the ace of trumps. To do so, however, would be to deprive himself of the opportunity of seeing the interesting, if not particularly picturesque or characteristic, strip of territory which forms the natural introduction to the county.

For the traveller speeding westwards from Paddington, ' the great divide ' is the Blackdown hills, an elevated ridge of green sand, along the summit of which runs the boundary between Somerset and Devon. Their spurs extend across the railway line, and as soon as the traveller has plunged through the Whiteball tunnel he has crossed the frontier and finds himself in Devonshire. It is not, however, altogether a different world into which he has emerged, for the lingering influence of the sister county for a while

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seems to follow him into Devon. The railway slides down the valley of the Culm, and the Culm, though a Devonshire stream, has all the sluggishness of a Somerset river. ' Culme,' says Westcote, ' fleeteth, like the waters of Shiloah, with a slow and still current.' When it leaves its cradle among the Blackdowns, it spreads in the leisurely Somerset fashion among some rich flat lands more attractive to the farmer than the artist. The Culm valley is a land of ' willowy meads and shadow'd waters creeping ', but before it is actually reached there are one or two places on the fringe of these hills which merit a visit.

Burlescombe (Búrl-escombe), the first village on the railway line, is chiefly notable for its extensive quarries of road metal, but it has a rather interesting fifteenth-century church on the top of the hill overlooking the railway. It has a screen and some seventeenth-century monuments to the Ayshfords, whose old home was to the south-west and is now a farm, but retains its fourteenth-century chapel. At Canons Leigh are some slight traces of a nunnery founded in the reign of Henry III as a substitute for a House of Austin Canons, which once occupied the site. More interesting and picturesque than Burlescombe is Holcombe Rogus, lying at the foot of a hill beyond the ridge where the quarrymen are at work. Standing just above the village on the hill-side is a fine Tudor manor-house built by the Bluetts. Though no longer in its entirety it is still an imposing edifice with a fine towered entrance and a great hall. The church, near the house, has a groined porch displaying the heads of Edward III and Queen Philippa, and contains a side screen enclosing a chapel crowded with Bluett monuments, and a richly wrought Jacobean manorial pew. Sampford Peverell, standing above the derelict Great Western Canal, once had a castle and still retains the gateway of a house where Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, once resided. She is said to have added the south aisle to the thirteenth-century church, which contains an effigy of Hugh Peverell

(1239), who perhaps built it. In 1810 the village was the scene of some sensational occurrences, for a folio Greek Testament was thrown about a room, or at least translated, and to open his mind to further light a candlestick was hurled at the head of the occupant. These spirited performances were repeated with variations for three years and were never explained. The traveller enters the Culm valley at Tiverton Junction, from which a short branch line runs up to three little places on its upper reaches. They are Uffculme, Culmstock, and Hemyock (Hemmick). Uffculme, the biggest, is a small market town possessed of a stately church with a broach spire. The interior has a thirteenth-century north aisle and two fifteenth-century south aisles. The interior preserves a fine screen, a baluster parclose, a tomb of Sir William Walrond (1663), and the effigy of an armoured knight in a wig.

Bradfield, the seat of the Walronds, a gabled E-shaped house, two miles to the south, is reputed to be ' the finest sixteenth-century mansion in the county '. Culmstock, some two miles higher up the river, is a small village lying almost within the embrace of the Blackdowns. It is the scene of Blackmore's novel *Perlycross*. It has a rather bare-looking church with a massive tower. The stone screen which it once possessed was transformed by Blackmore's father, who was once its rector, into a reredos. In the north aisle is preserved a faded fifteenth-century cope. Hemyock is altogether amongst the hills, and looks down upon the river. The church has been rebuilt, but behind it are the ruins of a small castle which Cromwell took the trouble to dismantle. All that now remains of the fortress are two drum towers flanking its gateway, and a thirteenth-century arch forming the doorway to a cottage built within the court. The sight of one ruin may incite the visitor to search for another. At the bottom of a deep and picturesque valley threaded by a tributary of the Culm are some remnants of Dunkeswell (Dunkswell) Abbey. The abbey was founded as a Cistercian house in 1202 by Lord Bruere.

A small modern church has been erected on its site, but at the entrance of its graveyard are the crumbling ruins of a gatehouse and near it are some ivy-mantled walls. 'These stones, alas! these grey stones,' and a large stone coffin in a corner of the church are all that is now left of this once-flourishing religious establishment. Three miles to the north-east of Hemyock, standing on the Blackdowns, high above the Culm valley, is Clayhydon, which has a small church containing the effigy of a priest.

Below Tiverton Junction is Cullompton, the Culm town *par excellence*. It stands at the foot of a long ridge which stretches from the valley of the Culm to that of the Exe. Cullompton is a pleasant and rather sleepy old town of virtually a single street which runs over the toe of the hill and contains a gabled Tudor mansion and a couple of old-fashioned houses. The great architectural feature of the town, however, is its spacious and handsome church, with its elaborately ornamented tower. In keeping with the richness of the latter, John Lane, a wealthy clothier, in 1526, built an additional south aisle, below the windows of which run a number of invocations. The aisle carries a fan-traceried roof, which has had to be supported within by panelled buttresses built against the piers. Lane's tomb is on the floor, but it has been stripped of its brass and is now only recognized by its inscription. The church possesses a fine roof and a richly-coloured screen. The rood beam is still in its original position, but the base of the Calvary which surmounted it lies in a sadly decayed condition beneath the tower.

There is a long stretch of flat but well-timbered land between Cullompton and Honiton. Hidden in the leafy lanes which traverse it are some quiet villages whose churches have some good woodwork to exhibit. Willand Church, near Tiverton Junction, has a small but rather unusual screen. Kentisbeare, on a slight slope to the south-east of Willand, has a church with a good screen, displaying some ingeniously diversified panelling and a good parclose.

In the chancel is a marble monument to G. W. Scott, the son of a former rector, who died at the age of thirty. It bears an epitaph written by Sir Walter Scott, which does more credit to his friendship than his genius :

> Fair hopes and flattering prospects—all these gone ;
> Lo, here they end—a monumental stone.
> But let submission check repining thought,
> Heaven crowned its champion ere the fight was fought.

To the east of Kentisbeare rises the long, level-topped ridge of Black Down, which bears on its summit a beacon tower and commands an extensive and inspiring prospect.

> Before me shone a glorious world,
> Fresh as a banner bright unfurled
> To music suddenly.

A lane from Kentisbeare through the stream-bordered hamlet of Dulford crosses the Honiton road and leads to Plymtree. Amongst the meadows not far from Dulford is Kerswell Priory, a farm occupying the site and embodying some remnants of a Cluniac cell founded in 1250 by Matilda Peverell and connected with Montacute Priory in Somerset. Plymtree is a scattered parish whose church has a fine screen—on one of the panels of which is a representation of the Adoration of the Magi, exhibiting the portraits of Henry VII, Prince Arthur, and Cardinal Morton—some carved bench ends, and some Jacobean panelling. On the west wall is a small sculpture of the Resurrection belonging probably to an Easter sepulchre. Joseph Dornford, who was Newman's contemporary at Oriel, was once rector of Plymtree. He had served as a volunteer in the Peninsular war, and at Oxford was nicknamed ' the corporal '. His campaigning experiences made him somewhat unconventional in his habits. On one occasion he went to see his bishop, the formidable Henry of Exeter, wearing a pair of white trousers and a black tie. When the bishop remonstrated with him on his unclerical attire, Dornford explained

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that his trousers had washed white. 'Am I to conclude, then,' the bishop severely retorted, 'that your tie, on the contrary, has washed black?'

Below Cullompton the scenery (spoilt, however, by a number of large paper-mills) becomes increasingly varied and Devonian in character. The hills close in and the landscape begins to assume that aspect of silken opulence which one associates with the Devonshire country-side. Three miles to the south of Cullompton, and thrown like a saddle over a ridge, is the old town of Bradninch. Like Cullompton, Bradninch has made its central street into a kind of boulevard. But this concession to modern fashion is only intended to emphasize the ancient dignity of the place, for the boulevard leads up to the Guildhall at the top of the rise, and the Guildhall crystallizes all the time-honoured traditions of Bradninch. Bradninch obtained its charter in the twelfth century, and from the reign of Edward II to that of Henry VII it sent two representatives to Parliament. It claims precedence over even the city of Exeter, for the castle of Exeter was in the barony of Bradninch, which is still an appanage of the Duchy of Cornwall. The Mayor of Exeter, it is alleged, was bound to hold the stirrup of the Mayor of Bradninch whenever those two functionaries met. Fortunately for the dignity of the Mayor of Exeter they no longer meet, for the Municipal Corporations Act of 1883 made a clean sweep of Bradninch's ancient privileges, but the town still proudly preserves its municipal regalia. The mayor of Bradninch had always an independent way of looking at things and invariably showed a proper sense of his own importance. On one occasion, when his worship's attention was called to the fact that he was reading the paper upside down, he stiffly replied: 'The Mayor of Bradninch has a right to read the paper any way he chooses.' The Guildhall has been modernized, and so also to some extent has the church, which stands behind the houses half-way down the slope. The church, however, happily retains its gorgeous screen,

but what seems to have been regarded as a superfluous parclose has been transferred to the tower arch. At the bottom of the hill is the sixteenth-century manor-house of the Sainthills, a rather stiff Tudor mansion with projecting wings, at which Charles I is said to have spent a night during the Civil War. Lower down the valley of the Culm is Killerton Park, which spreads itself at the foot of the striking-looking eminence of Dolbury, crowned by an earthwork. At the entrance of the park is a large modern 'Norman' chapel. The Culm flows among some water-meadows near the railway, and ends its vagrant and unsensational career by uniting with the Exe a mile to the south-west of Stoke Canon, whose ugly church contains a curious Norman font. The neighbouring church of Rewe has a screen and some carved bench-ends. South of Killerton Park there is another Devonshire mansion, Poltimore House, which was garrisoned by Fairfax during the Civil War. Poltimore village and church are on the northern outskirts of the park. The church is an interesting little cruciform building spoilt by the modern addition of a south aisle. It has the unusual feature of a small clerestory and contains a good screen, removed, however, from its original position. In the south transept, under an ugly gallery pew, is the effigy of Richard Bampfylde (1594). On the Exeter road, beyond Poltimore Park, is Pinhoe, where Ethelred is said to have defeated the Danes in 1001, after their raid upon the neighbouring village of Broad Clyst. Pinhoe is now almost absorbed by the city, but its church still stands aloof on a knoll about a mile to the north. It contains a fifteenth-century screen and pulpit, and near the door is a quaint Jacobean almsbox surmounted by the carved figure of a peasant.

CHAPTER III

THE EVER-FAITHFUL CITY

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from Ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers.

BYRON

AS a tourist resort Exeter has the supreme qualifications of centrality and accessibility. It is set, as nearly as conditions allow, in the middle of the shire, and all roads lead to it and from it. It has the additional advantage of occupying a picturesque and characteristic situation. If the traveller gets no farther than Exeter, he will at least have the satisfaction of feeling that he has been in the very heart of Devon. For Exeter focuses the history of Devon, as completely as its surroundings reflect the scenery, or its markets exhibit the produce of the county. Exeter is typically Devonian in its general atmosphere of quaint informality; and its surroundings show that engaging combination of sea, river, and softly swelling hills which make up a typical Devonshire landscape. It stands on a hill-side overlooking the Exe, just where the stream ceases to be a river and becomes an estuary, whilst around it spreads a verdant expanse of woods and meadows rising in billowy undulations which break out into crests of wild moorland.

Exeter is not only very Devonian but very English. 'Exeter,' declared Professor Freeman with pardonable enthusiasm, 'may well stand first on the muster roll of English cities, for with its unbroken history of eighteen centuries behind it, the capitals of Europe beside it are but things of yesterday.' Though this eulogy may sound a

little extravagant, yet none the less Exeter is a very notable place. If it cannot claim the proud pre-eminence which the historian assigns to it, it is, at any rate, as he says, ' a typical English city '. It has the national note of historic continuity strongly marked. Though ruthlessly modernized and spoilt in the process, its venerableness will be apparent to the most casual and impatient observer. It is

> A town, with a high ruined castle and walls mantled with ivy,
> With church towers square and strong and narrow irregular streets.

Everywhere the old order asserts itself in picturesque and pathetic protest against the new. But the protest is unhappily ineffectual. It is for ever expanding, and miles of dreary suburbs now envelop it and give it the aspect of a precious picture set in a cheap frame.

The visitor will probably find his way first to the cathedral as the city's chief centre of interest. Its position is central but obscure. It stands in a close behind the main street and is almost effectually screened from observation. The exterior is remarkable for its squatness. There is nothing soaring about it. It is the only cathedral in England in which the towers serve as transepts. With the exception of a small crypt beneath one of the chapels, these twin towers are the sole survivals of the cathedral built by the first Norman prelate, Bishop Warelwast (1107–29), and they seem to have determined the layout and character of the fabric which superseded it. They are massive rather than graceful, and look more as if they belonged to a castle than a church. They stand on either side of the building like two sturdy props, and give the cathedral its appearance of broad solidity. This impression of firmness and width is enhanced by the extraordinarily deep buttresses which like splay feet spread out on the south and by the prolonged slope of the west front. ' It has some pretensions too this

front,' for it has a fine window and a projecting portico adorned with statuary. It was Bishop Grandisson's (1327–69) addition to the fabric, and, like the rest of the building, 'has borne the weather's brunt'. Frequent restorations have mottled the mellow tint of the stonework, and much of the imagery is new. It is upon the interior of the cathedral that the skill of the builders was chiefly lavished, and they spared no pains to make it 'exceeding magnifical'. Bishop Grandisson declared that when it was finished it would excel in beauty all similar edifices in England and France. How far this optimistic prophecy has been fulfilled the spectator must judge; but he will feel constrained to admit that the work is a very noble achievement.

> So vast in space, so just in symmetry,
> It widens to the contemplating eye,
> With colonnaded aisles in long array
> And windows that enrich the flood of day
> O'er tessellated pavements, pictures fair,
> And nichéd statues breathing golden air.

The ornamentation throughout is profuse, and the general effect of rather exuberant richness is increased by the uninterrupted flow of the deeply corrugated roof, which stretches from end to end of the building and harmonizes with the rippling lines of the clustered columns. There is the same regard for general uniformity and symmetry displayed here as at Salisbury Cathedral, but a much more pliant fancy has been exhibited in the details. The consistency of the building is all the more remarkable as the reconstruction of the Norman cathedral was commenced by Bishop Bronescombe (1258–80), and the fabric was not completed till a century afterwards. The only irregularities in the general design are the north porch, a little minstrel gallery in the clerestory, and a projecting chapel at the west corner of the north aisle. It is generally supposed that the master-mind in the conception of the design was Bishop Quivil's (1280–91), and that

> The men who fashioned for the sense
> These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
> Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells
> Where light and shade repose and fancy dwells,

faithfully adhered through all the changes of architectural fashion, to his plans. The stone choir-screen and the oaken episcopal throne are attributed to Bishop Stapeldon (1307–26). The rest of the woodwork, with the exception of the ancient misericords, was destroyed by the Puritans, whilst the stately throne itself, ' rich with canopies ', only escaped a similar fate by being promptly removed and concealed. The cloisters were also demolished, though they have since been partially rebuilt, and the cathedral itself was partitioned between the Presbyterians and the Independents. The ancient glass of the east window likewise survives, and there is a small fourteenth-century light in the vestibule of the chapter-house. In the north transept, in the tower of which hangs Great Peter, one of the largest bells in the kingdom, is a curious astronomical clock somewhat similar to the one at Wells Cathedral. Beneath the clock Precentor Sylke ' made himself a fearful monument ', for he is represented as wrapped in a silk shroud, to enforce the lesson of human mortality conveyed by its epitaph. The other monuments are numerous and interesting. Nearly all Exeter's more distinguished prelates are commemorated. Bishop Leofric has a memorial in the south chapel. Quivil rests in the centre of the lady chapel, with his predecessor Bronescombe on his right. The effigies of Bishops Stapeldon and his brother Sir Richard, both of whom met with tragic fates at the hands of a London mob, are in the north choir aisle. The bishop, who was Edward II's Lord Treasurer and fell a victim to his zeal in the king's service, reared for himself a still nobler monument by his foundation of Exeter College, Oxford. The haughty Grandisson built for himself a chantry at the west end, but his ashes no longer repose in it, for they were scattered to the winds in 1590 by the queen's ' visitors ' in

their eagerness to purge the cathedral from ' vain superstitions '. A sentimental interest attaches to the modern effigy of Bishop Patteson of Melanesia, in the south choir aisle, for he was murdered by the natives of his diocese in 1871. The cathedral during its career witnessed many gorgeous pageants, but none had so much historical significance and less ceremonial splendour than the reception given by the citizens to William of Orange in 1688 on his advance towards London after his landing at Tor Bay. The scene is graphically described by Macaulay, whose pen ran in sympathy with his feelings. It was an entirely unrehearsed programme. ' Lamplugh, the bishop, as soon as he heard that the Dutch were in Tor Bay, set off in terror to London, the dean fled from the deanery, the canons did not choose to appear in their stalls, but William repaired in military state to the cathedral. As he passed under the gorgeous screen the organ gave out a peal of thunder. He mounted the bishop's throne ; Burnet sat beneath him. The singers, robed in white, sang the Te Deum. When the chant was over Burnet read the Prince's Declaration ; but as soon as the first words were uttered, prebendaries and choir crowded in all haste out of the choir. At the close Burnet said in a loud voice, " God save the Prince of Orange ", and many fervent voices answered " Amen ".'

On the north side of the close is a seated statue of ' the Judicious Hooker ', the author, not as a schoolboy once declared of ' The Compleat Angler ', but of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, who was born in the suburbs of Heavitree in 1543. His simplicity was as morbid as his learning was monumental. He left the choice of a wife to his landlady, and she betrayed his trust, selecting for the situation her shrewish daughter, whose temper was ' like a dripping house '. She made him rock the cradle whilst he was studying how to rule the ecclesiastical world. Fuller describes him as a man of slovenly habits and utterly devoid of pulpit graces. In the Close, opposite Hooker's statue, is Moll's Coffee House, a quaint Elizabethan building containing an upper chamber

where Drake and Raleigh forgathered. Adjoining it is the small church of St. Martin, with a deflected chancel and some Caroline altar rails; and behind the church, in St. Catherine Street, is the hall and diminutive chapel of the college of Vicars Annular; whilst at the north-east corner of the Close is the picturesque town house of the abbots of Buckfast, near which is another old residence with a fine door. The episcopal palace, now turned into a suite of offices, is on the south-east of the cathedral. Though largely rebuilt it retains an oriel window and a handsome mantelpiece introduced by Bishop Courtenay (1478–87). In its grounds are some bastions of the city walls. In South Street is the charming little hall of the college of Priest-vicars, which was once connected with the Close by a street of clerical residences.

To visit the cathedral first is a natural impulse, but it throws the city a little out of its historical perspective, for Exeter was a place of military importance before it attained its present ecclesiastical dignity. Athelstan, when he overran west Wales in 926, made Exeter a stronghold by surrounding it with a wall, and it was the security which this wall afforded that induced Bishop Leofric in 1057 to remove his throne from Crediton to Exeter. Exeter's history really commenced with the castle mound on the top of the hill, for there is little doubt that its surrounding earthworks are of prehistoric origin. The Romans laid out their station below the British fortress, and Athelstan may have merely reconstructed the Roman fortifications. The earthworks are still impressive and may be seen in the castle grounds. The castle was built by the Norman conqueror on the site of the old British encampment, and was placed by him in the trusty hands of Baldwin de Moeles, his niece's husband. Henry III granted it to his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, but it was ruinous in the time of Charles I. It derived its name of Rougemont from its ruddy rocks, and Shakespeare's play upon the word in *Richard III* is too trite to need quotation. All that now

remains of it are some fragments of its outer walls and its Norman gatehouse, which, ' huge and square from its tall rock looks grimly down ' upon the city below. Within the castle enclosure are the assize courts and a statue of Lord Fortescue. In this area Penruddock and Grove, after their capture at South Molton, were executed in 1655 for their belated and abortive effort to restore the monarchy. Below the gateway, at the entrance to the castle grounds, is a museum. The castle, as was so frequently the case with walled towns, itself formed part of the city's defences, and the external wall of the castle was the angular wall of the city. The old earthworks within the outer court, however, cut the castle off from the city, so that it would both protect the citizens and overawe them. The northern external moat has been levelled and turned into a pleasant promenade—the Northernhay—in which are the city's elaborate war memorial, some statues of local celebrities, and Alfred Stevens's spirited sculpture of the Dear Stalker. Stevens (1818–75) was the son of an Exeter house-painter and studied art in Italy, where he found employment under Thorwaldsen. His best-known work is the Wellington statue in St. Paul's. The city walls ran down on both sides of the castle to the river. Besides the remnants of them to be seen from the Northernhay, glimpses of them may be caught lower down the city in Trinity Street and Quay Lane, whilst Bartholomew Street leads on to the top of their embankments. From the road bordering All Hallows churchyard, which overlooks a broad defile, a good idea of the medieval city's strategical position can be obtained.

The city, which these fortifications enclosed, formed a parallelogram with one side resting on the river. After the customary Roman fashion it was cut into four rectangular sections by streets which meet in its centre, though the construction of the important thoroughfare of Queen Street rather disguises this quadripartite arrangement. On a corner house at the intersection of the ancient streets is a large statue of St. Peter. Many Roman relics have from

time to time been unearthed in the city, and at the police station in Waterbere Street a fragment of a Roman pavement is preserved. The main thoroughfare follows the trend of the city towards the river, and falls sharply down to the bridge. ' Of the diverse streetes in Exeter,' Leland declared High Street to be ' the fayrest ', and in spite of its ruthless modernization it still retains a sufficiency of old gabled houses to give it distinction. All the city gates have disappeared, but a statue of Henry VII which once stood above the east gate is fixed against a house near the post office, and a tablet on a bridge spanning the defile in North Street indicates the former position of the north gate.

In a progress through High Street a passing impression may be gathered of the social life of the medieval city when the nobility as well as the traders found lodgings within its walls. In a quiet little street behind the houses near the post office is the town house of the Bamfyldes, a modest Tudor residence with a tiny courtyard. A mansion erected by Lord Russell on the site of a Dominican Friary, whose possessions he obtained at its dissolution, once stood in Bedford Circus. A little lower down High Street, a large draper's shop occupies the site of a fifteenth-century hostelry—the New Inn—which afterwards became a cloth hall, and finally ended its hospitable career as a civic banqueting chamber. It still retains the internal decorations which graced the festive gatherings it housed. The most cherished memorial, however, of Exeter's civic activities is the famous Guildhall, nearly opposite to the entrance to the Close. It is a fine fourteenth-century chamber covered by its original roof, but panelled with Jacobean wainscoting. It is fronted with a projecting Elizabethan portico supported on columns, in the upper story of which is the mayor's parlour. The hall contains a valuable collection of portraits, amongst which is Lily's picture of Charles I's daughter Henrietta, who was born in the city, and on the staircase are exhibited the sword and cap of maintenance presented by Henry VII, and another

HIGH STREET, EXETER

sword given by Edward IV, the scabbard of which is swathed in crape in loyal recollection of the death of King Charles the Martyr. In Fore Street, below the Guildhall, is the Tuckers' Hall, an interesting relic of the time when Exeter was one of the chief centres of the cloth trade. In the Mint, a narrow street off Fore Street, are the guest-hall, kitchen, and undercroft of St. Michael's Priory, founded by Gytha, the mother of Harold, but, along with the neighbouring church of St. Olave, bestowed by the Conqueror, with other spoils of the vanquished, upon Battle Abbey. Hoker says that the ransack of the monastery at the Reformation roused a good deal of local ill feeling, for 'certeyn women and wyffes some with spykes, some with shovels, some with pykes and some with such tooles as they could geyte' set upon the spoilers, and one stalwart female knocked a man 'clene through a window and sent him packynge'. Stepcote Hill, a declivitous and narrow street of old houses, is perhaps the quaintest sight in the city. In Preston Street, hard by, is an old building with some remnants of a Norman doorway. Two of the city's modern institutions—the Royal Albert Museum and the University College—are in Queen Street. Two other places which the tourist should visit to complete his impressions of the city are Mount Dinham and Wynard's Hospital, but they both lie outside its ancient boundaries. Mount Dinham is on the ridge beyond the defile near the site of the demolished north gate. It is conspicuously crowned by the modern church of St. Mary Magdalen, and it commands a good view of the city and river valley. Adjoining the church are Dinham's Free Cottages and Dr. Blackall's School. Wynard's Hospital, originally founded in 1430, is in Magdalen Street, on the south-eastern skirts of the city. It is likewise now a group of charity houses built in the form of a quadrangle embodying its ancient chapel.

The city is said to have once possessed no less than thirty-five parochial churches. Only a tithe of these now remain, and the survivors are mostly small and more

remarkable for their peculiarities than their beauty. St. Stephen's, in High Street, has a crypt, and in its vaults Jackson the once-popular local composer is now decomposing; St. Lawrence has over its doorway a figure of Queen Elizabeth; St. Mary Arches contains some Norman arcades and the effigy of a mayor; and the quaint little church of St. Mary Steps, which faced the water gate, has an intruding flight of steps and a clock on which are mounted the figures of Henry VIII and some guards. The church of St. Thomas, in Exeter's transpontine suburb, has a tower rendered memorable by the ghastly execution of its vicar, Welsh, for his participation in the religious rising of 1549. 'He was brought to the place, and by a rope round his middle drawn up to the top of the tower and there hanged in chains in his Popish apparel, and there his corpse remained for four years.'

The visitor will scarcely do justice to the sights of Exeter if he does not at least look at the river, for it has contributed in the past both to the making and undoing of the city. It was up its estuary that the Danes sailed to plunder the burghs in 879 and 894, but it was by the fleets which the river floated seawards that the citizens afterwards waxed wealthy. They were not allowed for long, however, to gather in the full harvest which the tide brought them. The masterful Isabella de Redvers in 1284 quarrelled with the city and had the trees on her estate cut down and thrown into the river to dam its channel. One of her successors turned the feud to profitable account by constructing a quay at Topsham and thus secured the harbour tolls. In the reign of Henry VIII the citizens, however, got round the difficulty by cutting a canal through the neighbouring meadows, and Exeter again flourished as a port. It is through this artificial channel, enlarged in modern times, that vessels still approach the city, and there are extensive wharves and basins below the bridge. It must be admitted that the Exe loses much of the bloom of its beauty as it passes through the purlieus of the city.

But even in its degradation it is a lively, if not too limped, river. A walk along the road by its banks from St. David's station to the bridge will give the visitor a view of its more turbid waters. By continuing this river-side ramble below the bridge he can reach the quay and get an idea of the city's maritime activities. The walk can be extended partly by the water side and partly across fields to the pretty river-side hamlet of Countess Weir, near which he can cross the river and return along the banks of the Ship Canal, from which he will be able to obtain a pleasing view of the city.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESTUARY OF THE EXE

Whilst all the woods with melody are ringing
I seem to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many winding river
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses :
Till like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around
Into a sea profound.

SHELLEY

BY the casual traveller one of the best-remembered features in a railway journey to the west will probably be the circuit which he made of the western shore of the estuary of the Exe. Below Exeter Devonshire seems suddenly to cleave asunder, and its green glades give place to a shining expanse of water environed by distant hills and girdled with gleaming towns. The scene is always striking, but it is not always equally entrancing. The sea is a quick-change artist and constantly substitutes one picture for another. The tide, which spreads its silver sheen over the landscape, ever and anon beats a hasty retreat to its ocean depths, and leaves this wide valley floored with sand and mire. Still the green hill-sides and twinkling towns are always there, and with each returning flood the picture resumes its beauty. The two sides of the estuary differ, but they differ chiefly in the way in which the hills are disposed. They are higher, more varied, and envelop the estuary more closely on the west than on the east. Along the entire length of the eastern shore a level tract of meadowland runs at the foot of an extensive moorland plateau. At the western foot of this ridge flows the little river Clyst, which falls into the Exe at Topsham. Topsham

used to be something of a thorn in Exeter's side, for it stands at the head of the estuary, and, as has already been said, took a mean advantage of its position and plagued the city sadly by bottling up its waterway. But though Topsham has not given up its commercial pretensions, it has long since abandoned its rivalry and is now content with the humbler role of one of the city's suburban dependencies. It has in consequence a rather dreary and disgruntled aspect. In a rather half-hearted attempt to become a residential district, it has spread itself inland; but old Topsham still hugs the river and its church overlooks its quay. With the exception of its tower the church has been rebuilt, and its only features of interest are some monuments of the Duckworths by Chantrey. A house in a water-side street bears a tablet marking the birthplace of W. W. Follett (1795–1845), who was Attorney-General in 1844. To reach Exmouth, which will be the visitor's chief objective, he will, on leaving Topsham, have to cross the Clyst, which here meanders amongst some salt marshes, and

> Beneath an ancient bridge its straitened flood
> Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud.

Lower down the estuary the little fishing village of Lympstone lines the river, and contrives to hide it effectually from a visitor's view.

Exmouth, Exeter's great half-holiday resort, stands in a commanding position at the mouth of the estuary. Its constantly extending boundaries are a testimony to its popularity, but there is nothing characteristically Devonian about Exmouth. It is a pleasant, well-ordered but rather conventional watering-place. It will delight those who like to take their airing in the vicinity of a bandstand, for it has some fine sands, a spacious promenade, a pier, and all the rest of it. A terrace-crowned cliff, the scarp of which has been ingeniously converted into a pleasure garden, preserves the shore from the flat monotony of many

popular sea-side resorts; but lest it should forget that it is really an estuarine town, the long, curved bar of Dawlish warren stretches almost across the river and stares it in the face. In spite of its up-to-dateness, Exmouth is an ancient port, and it still has a dock, but so well screened is it, that the casual visitor often fails to observe it. Exmouth has a large and handsome modern church, but there is an old church with a good screen and parclose at Littleham, a contiguous village which Exmouth is rapidly annexing.

Exmouth's neighbour, Budleigh Salterton, is situated at the mouth of the Otter. Though rapidly rising in popular estimation as a sea-side resort, Budleigh is still in an embryonic stage, and seems a little doubtful whether or not to take the destiny thrust upon it seriously. The sea appears to be regarded merely as an incidental feature, for the town for the most part turns its back upon it. As a concession to those who care about salt water a modest parade has been provided above the pebble beach, and a pathway from it leads to the top of some fine cliffs. Otherwise but little effort has been made to exploit the marine advantages of the district. This informality and want of ostentation, which stands in strong contrast to the publicity of its neighbour Exmouth, will, however, be regarded by many as not the least of Budleigh's merits. Those for whom even Budleigh is too conventional and who seek further retirement, need only travel a couple of miles up the Otter valley to East Budleigh to find it. East Budleigh nestles in a dale at the foot of the furzy expanse of Black Hill, and is a typical Devonshire village of white walls and heavily thatched roofs. It is notable for its association with the Raleighs. In its church, amongst a fine array of carved benches, is the Raleigh pew, from which the family arms have been erased. On the floor near it is the gravestone of Joan Raleigh, Sir Walter's father's first wife. The soldier's birthplace is now a farm in a dingle to the west of the village. It is a modest thatched building with projecting and gabled wings. Sir Walter's father was thrice

married, and Sir Walter was the son of his third wife, who was likewise the mother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Sir Walter described his breeding as 'wholly gentleman and wholly soldier'. Impoverished by his unsuccessful adventures with Gilbert in the Spanish Main, he sought his fortune at court, and the sacrifice of his cloak, when that article of apparel 'formed a considerable portion of his estate', introduced him to the personal notice of the queen. He seems to have retained an affection for Hayes Barton, for in 1584 he declared that as it was the place of his birth he had 'a natural inclination to seat himself there than elsewhere'; but this inclination he does not seem to have gratified. On the opposite side of the Otter river is Otterton, a village grouped around a knoll on which stands a modern church. The tower of the ancient church remains at the north-east corner of its present substitute. At the west end of the building are some coffin-plates of the Dukes, who once resided at the adjoining manor-house, now rebuilt. The house occupied the site of a monastery founded by King Stephen but despoiled by Henry V for the endowment of Zion House. Some slight traces of its building still survive. At Colaton Raleigh, prettily situated in the vale of the Otter, is a thirteenth-century church, much modernized, and a picturesque old manor-house of the Raleighs, in the garden of which Sir Walter is said to have first planted his potatoes. In the centre of the desolate expanse of moorland which rises between the Otter and the Exe, in the midst of a copse, is Woodbury 'Castle', a large, irregular entrenchment with a double vallum. On the surrounding common, which commands a fine view of the estuary of the Exe, Lord Russell had a successful skirmish with the rebels of 1549.

Woodbury village lies at the western foot of the hill. It is a large and not unpleasing place, possessed of a fifteenth-century church containing a screen, a Jacobean pulpit, some Laudian altar rails and a monument of Sir Thomas Prideaux (1640).

Woodbury Castle was not the only place in the district where Lord Russell came into conflict with the rebels of 1549. The visitor can view the scene of another encounter by following the course of the Clyst from Clyst St. George to Clyst St. Mary. The church of Clyst St. George was rebuilt in a rather elaborate manner by Henry Thomas Ellacombe, the campanologist who wrote a standard work on the bells of Devonshire. 'He ran up every belfry in the county,' says Thomas Mozley, 'and when the parson heard his bells tinkling, clanging and jangling he rushed out in wrath to see who the disturber of his peace was. One irate clergyman exorcised Ellacombe on the spot, and his church is in consequence conspicuous by its absence from the book.' The church of Clyst St. Mary, a little cruciform building, is in the centre of Winslade Park.

Sir Walter Raleigh's father saw an old woman with a set of beads in her hand enter the church in an excited condition, and 'in the midst of the congregation begin to upbraid in harsh and unseemly speech the new religion; whereupon the people, in all haste, like a nest of wasps, flung out of the church' and began to fortify their village. The great body of the insurgents, who had been vainly attempting to capture Exeter, fell back upon the Clyst and endeavoured to withstand the pursuit of the royal forces behind the barricades which the villagers had erected at Clyst bridge. The attack upon the position is said to have been led by the John Yarde whose monument is in Clyst Honiton Church, and in spite of a strenuous resistance it was completely successful, for the rebels were routed and dispersed. The fight virtually ended the rebellion, though Hooker says: 'Such was the valour and stoutness of these men that Lord Grey declared that never in all the wars in which he had been did he know the like.' The Clyst, which gives its name to a quite large family of villages, rises in the flat lands near Plymtree, and pursues a very unromantic course through the meadows. Its villages are not of great interest. At Clyst St. Lawrence, near its source,

there are the remains of a screen in the church and a stepped Calvary with a shattered head in its graveyard. Broad Clyst, the largest and most important of the group, was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1870. Its church, which happily escaped the conflagration, is a fine edifice with a stately tower, and contains an effigy of Roger Norant (1350), curiously placed behind the sedilia. By the side of the river, near Clyst Honiton, is Bishop's Court, a ruddy mansion with tall chimneys and modern turrets, in the midst of a prettily timbered park. It was built originally by Bishop Bronescombe in 1270 and still retains its ancient chapel.

The most pronounced feature of the western border of the estuary of the Exe is the outstanding ridge of Haldon which runs parallel with the river and forms the watershed between the Exe and the Teign. It is a long, bold eminence, capped for the most part with moorland, but flanked on its eastern side by a range of well-timbered foot-hills. The region between the Exe and the Teign, like that between the Exe and the Otter, has two popular watering-places; they are Dawlish and Teignmouth. There are roads over the hill and along the shore of the estuary to both towns. The parting of the ways is at Alphington, a couple of miles out by Exeter. Alphington has now largely lost its rural character, but it still preserves some evidences of its antiquity. It has a fifteenth-century church, and a seventeenth-century vicarage. There is an old cross at the north entrance to the village and an old cross-head on its war memorial. In 1645 Fairfax's army occupied the village. The church has a tall red tower with a prominent turret and contains a screen with painted panels and a curiously sculptured Norman font. Two and a half miles beyond Alphington is Exminster, whose church retains its parclose and a Caroline pulpit. In the chancel is a seventeenth-century figured monument, and in the south chapel are tablets to the memory of Judge Kekewich and of General Kekewich, the defender of Kimberley; and in the

vestry is some old glass. Between Exminster and Starcross stretch the fine glades of Powderham Park, the ancestral demense of the Earls of Devon. The estate was granted by Edward I to Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, whose daughter married Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon. A knoll in the park is crowned by a turreted tower erected in 1773, but the castle itself lies, curiously, at the foot of the hill. It is a very composite structure, which, in spite of its architectural incongruities, is artistically not unpleasing. It has been described as an eighteenth-century effort ' to transform an old castle into a noble seat ' by the conversion of the chapel into ' an elegant drawing-room '. The oldest portions of the fabric date from the reign of Richard II, but these, with the exception of a tower, are mostly screened by the later additions. Fairfax's troopers fortified themselves in the church in 1645 and unsuccessfully laid siege to the castle, which was, however, surrendered in the following year. The church contains a screen, one or two carved bench-ends, and two curious figures in the top of the tower screen. In the south aisle is the effigy of a lady and Stevens's monument of the Countess of Devon (1867). The Dawlish road passes behind the castle and proceeds through Kenton, a considerable village ranged in rural fashion round its green, on which is a Celtic cross. The church, which stands on a bank above the village, is a particularly fine building with a stately tower and a beautiful porch. It possesses one of the best screens in the county, a richly carved pulpit, and a Jacobean pew. At Starcross the visitor is not likely to linger long. Its only interest lies in its landing-stage, from which a steam ferry plies to Exmouth, and in its proximity to the Black Forest, on the slopes of Haldon. Amongst the trees is Mamhead Park, in which is a small church. Under the depressing shade of a large yew in its graveyard Boswell once registered a vow never to get drunk again ; but it was a case of ' the devil a saint would be '. His sobriety only lasted until the bottle went round again. The mouth of the estuary is

almost bridged by a curved bar of sand, transformed into a golf course and bungalow settlement ; but the main road ignores the warren, and from Starcross climbs over the neck of the bluff above it. Down a short lane, at the entrance of which stands a Latin cross, is Cofton Chapel, a small towerless fourteenth-century building rescued from complete ruin in 1839. It possesses a mother-of-pearl cup said to have been taken from a Spanish ship. After crossing the hill the road drops down sharply to Dawlish. Dawlish, to use a vulgarism, ' puts all its goods in the shop window '. The observant railway traveller who flies past it on his way to the west gathers a fleeting impression of its snug and cheerful compactness. A sudden cleft in the cliffs discloses a little ' garden city ' trimly ranged round a lawn threaded by a tumbling torrent. The only thing hidden from the passing view is its church at the top of the glen, which has been rebuilt, but contains some monuments by Flaxman. The one thing which detracts from the amenities of Dawlish is the ruthless way in which the railway separates it from its beach. Dawlish has had many admirers, among whom was Thomas Ingoldsby. Before laying aside his facile pen for ever here in 1886 he used it to give a thumb-nail sketch of this ' airy retreat ', which bears his characteristic finger-print :

> Half-village, half-town, it is pleasant but smallish,
> A place I suggest as one of the best
> For a man breaking down who needs absolute rest,
> Especially, too, if he's weak in the chest,
> And known, where it happens to be known, as Dawlish.

Jane Austen, too, gave it a testimonial in *Sense and Sensibility* : ' It seems rather surprising that anyone could live in Devonshire without living at Dawlish.' A ridge of high red cliff, terminating in some fantastically-shaped rocks known as the Parson and Clerk, separates Dawlish from Teignmouth.

Teignmouth, unlike its neighbour, contrives to hide its

attractions from the railway traveller. It is so completely screened from view that he might almost pass it without being aware of its existence. Yet it is a large and deservedly popular resort with no ugly features to conceal. It stands for the most part on a spit of sandy shore stretching out into the estuary of the Teign, which the railway, in its eagerness to cut off a corner, avoids. The town and its strand are therefore left intact, a circumstance which has been turned to good account, for Teignmouth's sea-front is its most engaging feature. The broad parade has been spread with grassy lawns, which give it an aspect of refinement. Teignmouth's inviting display of marine attractions has not always been to its advantage. It had drawn to itself the attention of sea-rovers as well as of trippers. The Danes are said to have landed here and to have harried the inhabitants so ruthlessly that with their dying blood they dyed the cliffs, which still stand as ruddy memorials of the onslaught. The townsfolk again saw red when the French fired the town in 1347 and bombarded it in 1690. Teignmouth is still a substantial port, but, like Exmouth, it shows a proper regard for the aesthetic susceptibilities of its visitors by hiding its commercial activities from view. Its quays are tucked away in a bend of the river. Like Dawlish, Teignmouth has literary associations, for Keats, who came here to attend an invalid brother, completed *Endymion* during his sojourn, and the witty W. Mackworth Praed lived for a while in the town. The two local churches are modern, though one possesses a Norman doorway—probably once a chancel arch—and the other preserves a thirteenth-century tower. The wooden bridge which crosses the Teign above the town is alleged to be the longest structure of the kind in the kingdom.

A road to Exeter runs over the long and elevated ridge of Haldon, from which a fine view of the coast can be obtained ; and at the top of the ascent out of Teignmouth is a circular earthwork, and below it, in a dell behind Lidwell farm,

Where the heath and the broom clothe the
sides of a combe
Hid in a coppice of nut trees and apple,
The ruins still stand of a quaint little chapel.
It's not often shown, nor very well known,
And it's not very easy to find it alone.

Merely a gabled end, railed round to prevent its further demolition but overgrown with brambles, is now all that survives of the edifice. Ingoldsby tells the grim story which tradition has attached to this desecrated shrine. The priest who served its altar used to entice travellers when crossing the hill to his house by offering them hospitality. After the repast he robbed them, murdered them, and deposited their bodies in an adjoining well. This was their welcome! It was no doubt the chapel of a holy well, and the legend possibly originated from the fact that in the days of Bishop Bronescombe, a priest in this district was convicted of theft and deprived. Beyond the junction of the Teignmouth and Newton roads, in a valley, is the village of Kenford, and farther down the glen, prettily situated on the banks of the Ken river, is Kenn, where there is an attractive fourteenth-century church with a screen, some old benches, and the fragment of a triptych hung beneath its tower. Nearer Exeter, on a knoll to the west of the highway between Kenford and Alphington, is Shillingford, a tiny village with a Latin cross in its centre, and on its outskirts a small aisle-less church containing a few bench-ends and the tomb and brasses of Sir William Huddesfield (1499), Edward IV's Attorney-General and the builder of the tower. At Holcombe Burnell Church, amongst the hills to the west of the city, is an Easter sepulchre with a representation of the Resurrection.

CHAPTER V

THE VALLEY OF THE EXE

My path lay lately through a great city
Into the wooded hills surrounding it.

FEW English cities can compare with Exeter in the charm of its environment, for it is one of extraordinary beauty and variety. It consists of both seaboard and country-side. The visitor who has already explored the shores of the estuary will be eager to penetrate the green and luxuriant recesses of the interior, and will probably at once set out to follow the valley of the Exe, which opens so invitingly before him. As he sets his face northwards, however, he will find that the silver stream which swirls seawards past the city is really a combination of rivers, each with its own claim to attention. With the Culm he is already familiar, and he can postpone making acquaintance with the Creedy, another tributary, until he commences his journey through central Devon.

The Exe and the Creedy part company at Cowley bridge. On the top of the hill which overlooks the confluence of the two rivers is Upton Pyne, where there is a modest fifteenth-century church in which is an effigy of Edmund Larder (1611). Lord Iddesleigh, known as Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Beaconsfield's Chancellor of the Exchequer, is buried in the churchyard. He died in 1887 on the day of his resignation of the Foreign Secretaryship. Below Upton Pyne, on the river-side, is the pretty village of Brampford Speke. ' A brotherhood of lofty trees ' screens its church, but a path near the churchyard commands a charming view of the Exe meandering amongst its water-meadows. The church has been rebuilt, but it is interesting as the benefice to which Bishop Phillpotts in 1847 refused to

institute the Rev. G. C. Gorham on account of his views on Baptismal Regeneration. The incident gave rise to a furious controversy, and the decision of the Privy Council in the subsequent lawsuit was the immediate cause of the secession of Archdeacon Manning to Rome. Above Brampford Speke is Thorverton, which insinuates itself into a glen down which rattles a little brook. It has a few picturesque cottages and a church containing some carved bench-ends. On the other side of the river, standing on a hill, is Silverton, where Fairfax in 1646 quartered his troops. It is a large old-fashioned village near which is the 'classical' mansion which the third Earl Egremont built but never completed. Above Silverton the real beauties of the Exe commence, for the river comes gliding down between the high, dark walls of a leafy valley. At Bickleigh bridge, where the Exe is joined by the Dart, the prospect broadens, for the Dart valley also comes into the picture. Bickleigh Church contains some carved bench-ends and a number of monuments of the Carews. Bickleigh Court, the family seat, was in 1690 the birthplace of Bampfylde Moore Carew, the notorious 'King of the Beggars'. He was the son of the rector, and having got into trouble at Blundel's School ran away and embarked upon an astounding career of vagabondage. His histrionic abilities and plausible tongue enabled him to support himself by preying upon the sympathies of the charitable under various disguises. After roving about as the leader of a band of mendicants, he was arrested and transported to Maryland. A moralist who wished to 'improve the occasion' could 'adorn his tale' by taking the visitor to Cadeleigh, a village standing on the top of a hill facing the camp-crowned height of Cadbury. If Bickleigh was the birthplace of the gently-born ne'er-do-weel, Cadeleigh was the home of the industrious apprentice. In its church is a fine monument to Sir Simon Leach (1660), whose life was a romance. He was the son of a Crediton blacksmith, and rose to distinction and was knighted in 1625. Another

monument bears a singular inscription, but whether of personal or general application does not appear, but it might serve as the epitaph of the wastrel from Bickleigh :

> Ye wicked like a wasted candle sink
> Within ye socket and lie there and stink.

Cadeleigh Court, once the seat of the Leaches, but now a farm, lies on the hill-side below the church. Cadbury ' Castle ' is an oval enclosure with a single vallum, and in its centre is a pit for the storage of water. Excavations on the site in 1845 led to the discovery of some prehistoric relics, but nothing was found of the gold with which the hill and the neighbouring fortification of Dolbury in Killerton Park were popularly said to be stored.

> If Cadbury Castle and Dolbury hill dolven were,
> All England might be ploughed with a golden sheere.

Exeter's neighbour, Tiverton, as its name implies, throws itself across the peninsula which separates the Exe from its tributary the Lowman, just where in ancient times both streams could be forded. Of the two rivers the Exe alone is Tiverton's landscape gardener, for the Lowman is a tame and soulless stream which adds nothing to the beauty of the place. Nevertheless, the town owes to the Lowman the openness of its position, for the sluggish stream has broken down the eastern wall of the valley and levelled it almost to a plain. Through this gap the river steals almost unnoticed, and upon the knoll to which the hilly barrier has been reduced Tiverton has placed itself and slopes down on each side of its two fords. There is something almost Durhamesque in the river-side aspect of Tiverton. Though surrounded by water, it has more than once been destroyed by fire. The earliest conflagration was in 1598, when an old woman in an effort one Friday to bake some pancakes, burnt the town down ; fourteen years later there was another disastrous fire, and in 1731 three hundred houses perished

TIVERTON

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in the flames. Tiverton also has had some experience of the ravages of warfare. In the great rebellion of 1643 the Cavaliers drove the Roundheads out of the town, but two years later Fairfax stormed and captured it. Tiverton has always been a busy place. Originally it flourished on the manufacture of cloth. In 1816 lace-making was introduced by John Heathcote, and a huge factory by the river-side still carries on the industry.

The most notable antiquities in the town are the church and castle, which stand in close proximity to one another on the top of the hill. The castle, one of the many Courtenay strongholds, was first built by Richard de Redvers in 1100, but was subsequently much enlarged. Fairfax captured and dismantled it. It is now a private residence and consists chiefly of a large and well-preserved fourteenth-century gatehouse, a portion of the great hall, a cylindrical angle tower, and some much-decayed remnants of an outstanding block of buildings which rear themselves on the brink of the river, and

> With vacant eyes stare at the skies,
> Stare at the valley green and deep.

Within the castle is said to be preserved the fatal chest whose grim secret gave rise to the doleful ballad of ' The Mistletoe Bough '. The church, which stands equally high above the leafy banks of the river, is a stately and spacious Perpendicular structure with a handsome tower and a porch and side chapel exuberantly ornamented with various sculptured devices. The interior has a niched arcade, an altar tomb on each side of the sanctuary, and a couple of large pictures, one of which was the work of Richard Cosway (1740–1824), a local artist who gained a great reputation as a miniature painter. The most striking features of the building, however, are its roofs and the elaborate decorations of the porch and adjoining chapel, built by John Greenway, a Tiverton merchant, in 1517. The porch has above its inner doorway a representation of

the Adoration of the Virgin, flanked by the kneeling figures of Greenway and his wife. A finely wrought door opens from the porch into the chapel, to the east wall of which are fixed the brasses of the donors. There is a picturesque Tudor mansion at the entrance of St. Peter's Street, and in Gold Street, near the bridge which spans the Lowman, are some almshouses, incorporating a chapel, built in 1517, which also bear testimony both to Greenway's munificence and to his love of ornament. There are some other almshouses in Wellbrook Street, founded in 1579 by John Waldron, another local merchant whose tomb is in the church. But the institution of which Tiverton is probably proudest is the school founded by Peter Blundel, a local clothier, in 1604. The school is now housed in a huge block of modern buildings on the Halberton Road, but the old schoolroom, a picturesque seventeenth-century structure with large mullioned windows and gabled porches, stands within a walled enclosure near the station. It is now turned into private residences. John Wesley's brother Samuel, the friend of Atterbury, was once master of the school, and amongst its most distinguished alumni have been Bishop Bull, Archbishop Temple, Dean Hook, Jack Russell, the famous hunting parson, and R. D. Blackmore, the novelist, who gives a striking description of the school in *Lorna Doone*. It is said that in Russell's time the boys were accustomed to let one another down by a sheet from one of the dormitory windows for the purpose of raiding the head-master's vinery. On one occasion when Jack had hold of the sheet, he was astounded to find at the other extremity (so the tale goes) the Head himself. The lad in his dismay let go the sheet and the pedagogue made a precipitate and undignified descent amongst his own grapes, the colour of whose skins he did his best next morning to reproduce on those of the culprits. Tiverton was long associated with Lord Palmerston, who represented it in Parliament for thirty years. ' Pam ', with ' his undaunted courage, his exuberant vitality, and his unfailing urbanity ',

was universally popular with the townsfolk, and although he had 'a harsh voice which grated on the ear' and frequently stuttered in his utterances, never lost his hold upon his audiences. His ready wit and breezy geniality carried him triumphantly through many a hotly-contested election. Once when the Chartist candidate twitted him with being willing to serve under any flag, he replied: 'My opponent seems content to sail under one flag, but it is a black flag. I can at least assure him that I shall never hoist a white one.' As a politician he scarcely acted on Abraham Lincoln's discreet advice: 'Never promise more than you need, lest you should be required to perform more than you can', but he was generally adroit enough to extricate himself from any difficulty into which the exigencies of an election plunged him. He was once asked what had become of the measures which his government had promised but never introduced; his answer was: 'The goods are all ready for delivery; they are only waiting till called for.'

Few places can boast of so many beautiful walks as Tiverton, but the outlying villages are not of great archaeological interest. Washfield, on the western side of the Exe valley, has a church with a fine Jacobean screen, and a picturesque church house. There is a 'classical' screen and some Caroline altar rails at the church of Cruys Morchard in a wood above the valley of the Dart, and the small church of Loxbear has a Norman doorway and some Pre-Reformation bells. The fine church of Halberton, a large village on the Collompton road, has a magnificent screen and a carved pulpit. It was the benefice which provided the fodder for the stall in Bristol Cathedral occupied by Sidney Smith, who waxed merry about the parish of which he was the overseer but whose existence he had overlooked. The traveller who resumes his journey up the river, will above Tiverton enter upon one of its most beautiful reaches. The Exe is not entirely a Devonshire stream, for it rises in Somerset, but it gives to Devon the

combined beauties of both itself and the Barle, its Somerset tributary. Issuing from ' its darksome bed ' amongst the Exmoor hills, it unites with the Barle just as it enters the county.

> The sounding stream rejoicing free
> As captive set at liberty,
> Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
> She clamouring speeds upon her road

down a deep and narrow valley luxuriantly draped with woods and floored with strips of pasture. Up this sinuous and seductive vale,

> Where uplands sloping deck the mountain side,
> And woodlands flaunt in gay theatric pride,

the traveller should track the lively torrent, loyally following it in its vagaries until he stands on the Somerset border. Bampton, round which the Exe throws a wide loop, lies at the bottom of a narrow cleft, through which the little river Batham, as it comes wandering down a wide valley below the village of Morebath, has to squeeze itself on its way to join the Exe. It is a quiet little town without much pretension to picturesqueness or affectation of activity. Yet Bampton can be lively enough at times, for the Exmoor folk regard it as a moorland metropolis to which they resort for their marketing and merry-makings. In the autumn it is the scene of a boisterous fair when large numbers of ponies are driven in for sale. ' Exmoor ponies throng the streets, flood the pavements, overflow the houses and pervade the place from one end to the other.' Bampton once possessed a castle built by Richard Cogan in 1336. Its mound at the end of Castle Street now only remains. The church, which belonged to Buckland Abbey, has a low fourteenth-century chancel with a window above its arch. The screen, though somewhat mutilated, is handsome and there is a seventeenth-century pulpit. In the chancel are some panels of a fifteenth-century altar

tomb, and a window in the south is glazed with fragments of ancient glass. In the main street, near the bridge, beneath a cover, is a chalybeate spring ; but though its virtues have been vouched for by medical authority and it has a reassuring flavour of ' flat irons ', it has so far failed to secure for the town the reputation of a spa.

CHAPTER VI

THE REGION OF THE OTTER AND THE AXE

Above the grey old town overlooking the exquisite valley
Rises a quaint village church, deep in o'ershadowing yews,
On a round topped hill it stands, looking down on the silvery river
And the smooth meadows fenced by tall elms.

LEWIS MORRIS

AS everybody knows, the Great Western Railway does not monopolize the iron road to Devonshire. Exeter can be reached also by the Southern line. But by whatever route the traveller arrives at the city, he should make a point of seeing the two old Devonshire towns which the Southern Railway serves. They are Axminster and Honiton (Honeyton). They are alike only in the fact that their names are perhaps more familiar to the general public as those of commodities than as those of localities. Honiton was renowned for its pillow lace, and Axminster was famous for its carpets. In each case the reputation has outlived the industry. Neither Honiton lace nor Axminster carpets are now produced in the original home of their manufacture. The machine has robbed the hand of its cunning. That circumstance, however, does not deprive them of their interest for the uncommercial traveller, for they have much to show the sightseer if they have little with which to entice the trader.

It does not matter in which order they are visited, for they are only a few miles apart ; but the traveller who has already journeyed to Exeter will naturally make his way to Honiton first. The town is notable chiefly for the beauty and suavity of its surroundings. Nowhere is that pleasing combination of ' moist hills ', ' ambient streams ',

and ' emerald pastures ' so characteristic of the county, more subtlely and agreeably displayed than in the vicinity of Honiton. The Otter has carved out for its passage a broad and seductive valley, and then like a true artist has succeeded in effacing itself. It steals almost unobserved through the pastures. The hills are the dominating features of the scene, and they all have character. The valley is seen to the greatest advantage from above, for the picture it presents needs for its full appreciation a wide perspective. The most striking panorama is that unrolled from the top of the Sidmouth road, just where it begins its long descent into the town. The far-stretching and fertile vale is spread out below, holding in its embrace the slumbering town. In the background rises the shapely wooded cone of St. Cyrus Hill, with the rugged scarp of Hembury, and the plumed crown of Dumpdon standing out on either side to give it artistic balance. The river is seen gleaming only intermittently amongst the meadows, but its course can be followed by the trees which fringe it.

Honiton is a lazy, old-fashioned-looking town trailing along the floor of the valley, but its straight and airy street has no really antique feature. The church in its centre, though fronted by a fairly good tower, is a Victorian building with galleries. The old ' Golden Lion ' is reputed to have been a residence of the abbots of Dunkeswell. On the Exeter road is Abbot Chard's leper hospital, with a chapel, now turned into almshouses, and on the Axminster road is a house where Charles II is said to have tarried for a night on his flight from Worcester. The old parish church, built by that ' haughty prelate ' Bishop Courtenay (1477–87), is on a hill near the station to the south of the town. It was unfortunately deprived of its earlier interest by a disastrous fire in 1911, which gutted the building and destroyed Abbot Chard's fine screen. The building is cruciform in plan, but has no arches at the crossing. The aisles were added in the sixteenth century by John and Joan Takel, whose names appear on the piers. Near the

north door is the table tomb of Thomas Marwood, a centenarian physician, who had not only his own long life to testify to his skill, but also an estate, bestowed upon him by Queen Elizabeth for curing her favourite, the Earl of Essex. The jealousy which his success excited amongst his rivals, led him to seek a 'more healthy' atmosphere in the country. Pillow lace-making was introduced into Honiton by Flemish emigrants in the sixteenth century, but if it now lingers at all in the town, it is due to a sentimental regard for the industrial traditions of the locality.

To the south of Honiton rises the flat and extensive plateau of Farway Common, whose sterility contrasts strangely with its luxuriantly wooded slopes. On it are a saucer-like earthwork known as Farway Castle and a number of barrows. Near a large tree-crowned tumulus is the half-buried capstone of a cromlech. Farway Church lies on the side of the valley of the Coley. It has a Transition-Norman arcade, the monuments of Sir Edmund Prideaux (1628) and his son Sir Peter (1681), and a bust of Humphrey Holderness (1632), 'who built part of this church'. Farther down the Coley valley are the villages of North and South Leigh. North Leigh Church, standing on a slight ridge, possesses a small screen, some carved bench-ends and a restored Norman doorway. South Leigh lies in a little secluded glen at the foot of Blackbury, a wooded eminence crowned by an oval entrenchment with a peculiar nozzle-shaped entrance. The church contains a monument of Robert Drake (1600), with a Latin inscription.

There is an exceptionally large number of earthworks in this corner of Devon, and one of the most remarkable of them is Hembury fort, which commands the plain between the Otter and the Culm. A pleasant expedition to Hembury can be made through the village of Awliscombe. Awliscombe is a retired little place in verdant surroundings by the side of the Cullompton road. The church stands on a bank above the road and has a vaulted south porch built by Thomas Chard, the last abbot of Ford and suffragan

bishop of the diocese, who was born at Tracey—an old mansion still standing—in 1470 and was buried in his hospital of St. Margaret at Honiton. Within the church is a fine stone screen spoilt by a commonplace modern cresting. Hembury, by far the finest earthwork in the county, is an oval entrenchment at the end of a long, bold ridge, and is very strongly constructed, for it consists of three concentric and lofty ramparts, separated by deep ditches. The enclosure is divided into two courts by a double line of embankments and commands a fine view over the surrounding country. Hembury gives its name to two parishes in its vicinity—Broad Hembury and Payhembury. They are both pleasant places and can be reached from the Cullompton road, which runs below the fort. Broad Hembury lies by the side of a brook in a little wooded amphitheatre at the foot of the rounded back of Black Down. It is a spacious village surrounded by trees. The church has a good vaulted porch and a well-designed tower, said to be the prototype of the one at Broad Clyst, which the builder's apprentice reared to outdo his master's work. In the sanctuary is a monument with kneeling figures, and on the south wall is another to Francis Drewe (1675), with a helmet above it. Toplady, the author of 'Rock of Ages', was once vicar here, and his connexion with the parish is commemorated by a tablet in the chancel.

Payhembury lies amongst the flat lands on the south of the Cullompton road. It has a singularly attractive church containing a beautiful screen with a gilded cornice, a parclose, some good bench-ends, and a Queen Anne pulpit and sounding board. There is a cluster of villages to the south of Payhembury which may be included in the same tour and visited as the traveller returns to Honiton. They are Tallaton, Feniton, and Buckerell. Tallaton stands partly on the road from Cullompton to Sidmouth and partly lies in a dingle below it. The church, which is in the hollow, has a west tower ornamented on its buttresses

with niched figures. The interior contains a good screen, a parclose, and some panelled bench-ends. Feniton stands near the Otter, and its bridge was the scene of an encounter in 1549 between the royal troops under Lord Russell and the Cornish insurgents. Russell was at Honiton on his way to raise the siege of Exeter, which was beset by the rebels. A band of Cornishmen was detatched and sent forward for the purpose of barring his advance. They barricaded the bridge and posted themselves in the adjoining meadows. Russell forced the passage of the bridge, but only to find himself confronted by a 'new crew of rebels, tall, lusty fellows of great courage'. These he also routed, and the Cornish captain, 'whose comb was cut, showed a fair pair of heels and fled away', leaving three hundred of his men dead upon the field. The village lies in a slight hollow watered by a feeder of the Otter. The church has some carved bench-ends, a rich screen, and in a canopied recess a gruesome *memento mori* with the shroud thrown back over the head of the figure. From Feniton a lane leads across the rivulet to Buckerell. Adjoining Buckerell is Deer Park, which is said to have been originally a royal hunting lodge. The church is a small plastered cruciform building, and possesses a tall and rather peculiar screen.

The most important and interesting place in the neighbourhood of Honiton, with the exception of Axminster, is Ottery St. Mary, which lies in the valley of the Otter. It can be reached from Honiton by taking the Exeter road as far as the pleasant little hamlet of Fair Mile. Just above Fair Mile, charmingly seated on the banks of the Otter, is the modern mansion of Escott; whilst by the side of the Ottery road, below the hamlet, is the less happily situated but far more interesting and picturesque old Tudor manor-house of Cadhay, forming a quadrangle and standing back in dignified aloofness amongst some flat meadows. At the entrance of Ottery St. Mary is Heath Court—once the chanter's house—the residence of Lord Coleridge. Ottery

St. Mary is famous as the birthplace of S. T. Coleridge the poet, who was the youngest son of John Coleridge, the vicar and head-master of the Grammar School. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge did not, however, spring from the poet, but from his elder brother James. The poet, on the death of his 'revered, kind, learned, simple-hearted father', whose 'image was a religion' to him, was sent to Christ's Hospital in his eleventh year, and owing to his self-contained and solitary childhood was 'already something of a poet and still more of a metaphysician' when he left Ottery. Ottery, a quiet but rather modern-looking little town, was once noted for its serges and is still remarkable for its spacious church, the largest and most interesting parish church in the county. It stands on a rise behind the town, and with its twin transeptal towers bears a strong resemblance to Exeter Cathedral. Like the cathedral, it is designed on broad rather than lofty lines, and presents a very imposing aspect. The exterior bears a number of consecration crosses. The visitor, however, who expects to find within something of the grandeur and profusion of Exeter Cathedral will be disappointed. The interior, though of much architectural and antiquarian interest, is, in spite of its gaudy colouring, stiff, chill, and austere. The one note of richness introduced is the fine fan vaulting of the subsidiary north aisle. The church was consecrated by Bishop Bronescombe in 1260 and was reconstructed by Bishop Grandisson in 1337, who made it a collegiate church. Grandisson added the lady chapel and the additional north aisle was erected by the Countess of Stafford in the sixteenth century. There is a boldly niched reredos behind the high altar, which separates it from the retro-choir, and a fine rood screen forms the entrance to the lady chapel, which is by far the most attractive feature in the church. The corbels which support the low vault of the chapel are sculptured with the heads of Bishop Grandisson, his brother, his sister, and brother-in-law, and the quaint wooden eagle lectern bears

the bishop's arms. In the chancel is the altar tomb of John Haydon of Cadhay, the builder of the south porch. Beneath the arches of the nave arcade on either side is

> A massive monument
> Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise
> With many a scutcheon and device,

and carrying an effigy. They are supposed to be the tombs of Sir Peter Grandisson and his wife. In the north aisle are the brasses of John Sherman (1542) and two of his descendants, and the effigy of John Coke (1632), which is said to walk about the church at night, for local tradition asserts that he was murdered by his brother for the sake of his inheritance. In the adjoining transept is an astronomical clock. Alexander Barclay (*d.* 1552) was one of the canons of the College of Ottery St. Mary when he translated Brandt's *Ship of Fools*. The book was a sort of 'Dunciad', for no one was entitled to a berth in the vessel who had sense enough to know himself to be a fool. Barclay seasoned his translation with a little private spleen and pronounced his subordinates at Ottery to be 'full worthy' of being enrolled amongst the ship's passengers. Its connexion with Barclay and Coleridge does not entirely exhaust Ottery's literary associations, for it is supposed to be the 'Clavering St. Mary' of Thackeray's *Pendennis*, which 'looks rather prettier at a distance than it is on closer acquaintance', and where 'on the south side of the market place rises up the church, with its great grey towers, of which the sun illuminates the delicate carving; deepening the shadows of the huge buttresses, and gilding the glittering windows and flaming vanes'. The novelist in his unhappy Charterhouse days used to spend his holidays at Larkbeare, the residence of his stepfather, Major Carmichael Smith. Fairfax made the town his headquarters for a while in 1645 during the Great Rebellion, and his troops and their horses were housed in the church and all the old glass was destroyed. In 1866 the town was

partly wrecked by fire, for no less than a hundred and eleven houses are said to have been burnt out. Near the church is the manor-house, which has been rebuilt, but incorporates some features of the ancient mansion. The King's School, founded in 1545, has been removed to some new buildings near the station.

The Otter rises amongst the Blackdowns, and though a journey up the river will take the visitor through some quietly varied scenery, it will provide him with few other features of interest. The river flows below Dumpdon, which, with its clump of trees on its top, forms such a conspicuous object in a Honiton landscape. Its summit is enclosed by a shield-shaped encampment defended by a bold double vallum. On the hill-side beyond it is Mohun's (Moon's) Ottery, a farm-house occupying the site of an old manor-house of the Carews, but once a possession of the Mohuns. The lower story of the old gatehouse bearing the Mohun and Carew arms still stands at its entrance. Sir Peter Carew, one of Henry VIII's officials who made himself prominent in suppressing the Western Counties rebellion of 1549, was born here in 1514. He is said to have been so fractious as a boy that his father leashed him to one of his hounds, and he completed his education in self-control by subsequently becoming a muleteer. On a hill behind Mohun's Ottery is Luppit Church, a cruciform building with a crossing skilfully constructed out of timber, and retaining a remarkable Norman font. The stone screen which it once possessed was destroyed some years ago, and the tomb of Sir J. Carew (1320) has been deprived of its brass. Prettily situated higher up the Otter valley is Upottery, to which the seat of Lord Sidmouth gives an aspect of aristocratic orderliness. William Pitt's friend Henry Addington, the first Lord Sidmouth, was speaker of the House of Commons in 1789 and became Prime Minister in 1801. Canning ridiculed him and nicknamed him 'Happy Britain's Guardian Gander'.

Axminster is some nine miles to the east of Honiton.

As its name implies, it likewise is a river-side town, but, unlike Honiton, instead of lying in a valley it stands on a considerable ridge above its stream. Nor is that the only contrast which it offers to its neighbour. Instead of being laid out in one long line, it is closely curled round its minster. The close embrace in which it holds the church is symbolic of its history. A minster was in existence here as early as the eighth century, for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that Cyneheard, the Ætheling, who fell in combat with the Danes in 755, was buried at 'Axanmynster'. The church, which no doubt was monastic, was refounded in the tenth century as a college of priests by Athelstan to commemorate a great battle fought in the neighbourhood in 937, when 'five kings and seven earls' perished in the conflict. The battle is conjectured by some to have been that of Brunanburgh, which, however, is generally thought to have been fought in the north. During the great rebellion Axminster was occupied by the Royalists and was partly burned, and William of Orange in 1688 made it one of his sojourning places on his way to London. Carpet weaving, for which the town became famous, was introduced in 1755 by a Mr. Whitty. The carpets were made entirely by hand in a building near the church. The industry is now extinct and Axminster, like Honiton, from an industrial centre has become merely a market town. The church is a large but rather gloomy building with a central tower, the lower stages of which date from the thirteenth century. At the east end of the south aisle is a Norman doorway which formed the south entrance to the building but was placed in its present position when the aisle was added in 1800. The interior contains a tall carved pulpit of 1633, and on each side of the chancel an effigy. The one on the north is that of a vested priest whilst the one on the south represents a lady supposed to be the wife of Reginald de Mohun, the founder of Newnham Abbey.

Axminster itself contains few features of note, but

several interesting excursions can be made in its neighbourhood. Newnham Abbey, a Cistercian house, founded in 1246, stood near the river about a mile to the south of the town. Its site is now occupied by two adjoining farms, in one of which John Prince, the author of the *Worthies of Devon*, was born. Nothing, however, is left of the abbey buildings but a few walls incorporated in some cow-sheds. The Seaton road leads to the birthplace of a much more famous man. This is Ashe House, a small gabled farm once a manor-house, a couple of miles further along the road. Here John Churchill, the celebrated Duke of Marlborough, was born in 1650. His father was Sir Winston Churchill of Glanville Wotton in Dorset, a cavalier officer, whose loyalty to his king cost him his fortune. In his necessity he was received at Ashe by his mother-in-law, the widow of Sir John Drake who had died in 1636. At Ashe, Lord North received the fright of his life. He was exceedingly unpopular in Devonshire owing to the imposition of the cider tax. He came to Ashe at harvest time, and looking out the window he saw a band of rustics approaching the house brandishing their sickles and crying, ' We hav'n, we hav'n, the neck, the neck.' One of his companions rushed to the door with a sword in his hand and his lordship cowered behind the curtains livid with fear, until it was explained to him that the men had no intention of lynching him, and that ' the neck ' was merely the local name for the first sheaf which, in pursuance of some old pagan custom, was brought to the manor-house as a votive offering. At Musbury Church, beyond Ashe, is a remarkable Drake monument and the entry of John Churchill's baptism in the register. Three generations of the Drakes of Ashe, amongst whom are the duke's grandparents, are represented in a striking family memorial in the north aisle. Sir Bernard, the central figure in the group, quarrelled with the great Sir Francis, whose claims to relationship he repudiated, for appropriating his coat of arms, the Red Dragon. Queen Elizabeth,

thereupon, with some humour, granted the sailor the device of a ship with the Drake dragon turned upside down in the rigging. The original altar slab of the church is let into the communion table. Musbury village lies at the foot of Musbury ' Castle ', an encampment in the centre of a long ridge, surrounded by a single vallum.

Another encampment may be visited in the course of an excursion up the valley of the Yarty to the village of Stockland. Stockland stands in a pleasant situation on a hillside five miles to the north of Axminster. On the summit of an isolated hill about midway between the two places is Membury Castle, a large oval enclosure surrounded by a single rampart. Thrust into a narrow vale at the northern foot of the ' castle ' is the village of Membury. Its church, in front of which is a tall cross, retains in its south chapel—which contains a monument of Nicholas Fry (1619)—a slender but much decayed screen. On a monument of Sir Shelstone Calmady, who fell in a skirmish near the village in 1645, rest some cannon-balls and bullets found in the churchyard, and in the north transept is the effigy of a lady. Stockland Church, a more spacious but less interesting building than Membury Church, has a similar tower with a small lancet opening into the nave and a doorway sculptured with vine clusters.

A road from Axminster through Kilmington leads over the shoulders of Shute Hill to the remnants of the noble Tudor mansion of Shute, once the seat of the De Bonvilles and subsequently of the De la Poles. Though now a farm it is still an imposing building. The fine entrance gateway ' embattled high and proudly towered ' remains in its entirety. Of the actual mansion only a portion of the front and a projecting wing with a tower survive. The rest of the fabric was demolished in 1787. Shute Church adjoins the house and is a cruciform structure with a central tower and a north aisle. The tower arches are Early English and are pierced with squints which look into the transepts. In the north chapel is a full-length statue

by Cheere of Sir William Pole (1741) in his uniform as Master of the Household of Queen Anne.

The Axe rises in Dorset, and one or two parishes along its valley were until recently included in that county. One of them is Hawkchurch, on a hill-side overlooking the broad valley through which the Axe flows. The church has been rebuilt, but a little to the south of the church is Wylde Court, an Elizabethan mansion, in which Charles II is alleged to have tarried in his flight across the county in 1651. It is said to contain a handsome panelled chamber and a room on the floor of which is an indelible blood-stain. Two miles to the south-east of Hawkchurch on the border of the county is the wooded eminence of Lambert's Castle, surmounted by a strongly constructed earthwork with triple ramparts. During the great rebellion, the encampment was occupied by the Roundheads, and in its vicinity a skirmish took place in which Col. Hellier, the Royalist commander, was captured and hanged on the spot. On the opposite side of the valley is Chardstock, which can be reached through Tytherleigh on the Chard road. At Tytherleigh is a farm enclosed by high walls, embodying some portions of the old mansion of the Tytherleighs, whilst at Chardstock are some remnants of the old manor-house of the Bishops of Salisbury, fortified by Bishop Erghum in 1377. The church adjoining was rebuilt in 1863. Coaxdon Hall, a pretty fifteenth-century house by the road-side, two miles out of Axminster, was the birth-place of Sir Symonds D'Ewes, the Puritan antiquary. Coaxdon is said to have been the 'Munt St. Calyst in Devansyr', where, according to the chronicles of Newnham Abbey, the great battle took place which gave Axminster its minster.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOUTH-EASTERN SEABOARD

> Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
> Spreads like an ocean hung on high.
> The waves on either shore lay there,
> Calm, clear, and azure as the air ;
> And scarce then foam the pebbles shook,
> But murmured meekly as the brook.
>
> BYRON

HONITON and Axminster have each its own watering-place. They are Sidmouth and Seaton ; but both resorts have a much more than local reputation and rank amongst the most popular holiday haunts in Devon. Though close neighbours they have little in common, and illustrate the remarkable variety of physical conditions to be found within a short distance in Devonshire. Their one similarity is the circumstance that both stand at the mouths of rivers which, instead of forming wide estuaries, have to force their way through the shingle to the sea. In other respects they differ considerably ; they differ in both their climate and their surroundings, and the contrast which they present gives additional charm to the south-eastern seaboard.

Sidmouth was anciently a borough town governed by a portreve and possessed a harbour, but it sank into insignificance and owed its introduction to public notice to its selection in 1820 by the Duke of Kent as a place of temporary retirement when his purse was empty and his health was bad. He came here with the Princess Victoria, and died three months after his arrival. This fact, though scarcely an advertisement for a health resort, set the tide of fashion flowing towards the little derelict Devonshire

SIDMOUTH

SWANSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTRAL LENDING

fishing town, and the place which it gained in public estimation by royal patronage, it has since kept by its own intrinsic merits. Its chief characteristic is its snug salubrity. It lies at the entrance of a narrow forked valley, and is closely environed on either side by exceptionally high cliffs, but it faces an open and unencumbered shore on which the surf beats at times so furiously that its parade has more than once been swept away. Owing to the restricted space of its sea-front, the town has had to extend itself by retiring up the valley behind it, and this rather cramped situation gives it an uncomfortable look of congestion. It has, however, secured for itself another and more spacious residential retreat by annexing a prettily wooded glen at the mouth of which stands the Duke of Kent's former lodging. A very pleasant promenade skirts a shelving beach where ' waves on the diamond shingle dash ', and rare stones can occasionally be found amongst its pebbles. At its eastern end the Sid, which comes babbling down the valley, percolates through the rubble, and an ornamental bridge is thrown across the stream to afford communication with the cliffs beyond. Some cottages which once stood on the verge of the sea at the western end of the town obtained for Sidmouth a little passing notoriety, for they were swept away by a storm in 1824, a circumstance which was turned by Sidney Smith into a political parable. He likened the House of Lords' rejection of the Reform Bill to the action of Dame Partington, one of their occupants, ' who attempted to keep the ocean out of her house with a mop '. The town itself is of slight architectural or historic interest, though some Roman coins and the head of a Roman standard were found here in 1841. The church, in its centre, is a large Perpendicular building, which has been reconstructed in modern times. It contains a memorial window to the Duke of Kent given by Queen Victoria. A road from Alma bridge at the east end of the parade mounts steeply to the village of Salcombe Regis, tucked away in a combe running down the hill-side

to the sea. Salcombe is said to derive its name from the salt works which once existed at the mouth of the glen. Athelstan in 925 granted the place to the church of Exeter. Salcombe Church has a Perpendicular west tower, a thirteenth-century nave, but the remains of a Norman doorway are built into the south external wall, and there is some Norman ornament below the east window. The bolt of the lich-gate is said to be a converted ' resurrection corkscrew ' left behind by a body snatcher. There is another cliff walk at the opposite end of the town which passes over Peak Hill and High Peak—a fine projecting cliff of red sandstone—to Landram Bay, a favourite resort with picnic parties, where there is a strand strewn with masses of rock detached from the cliffs.

Inland a pleasant ramble can be taken up the banks of the Sid to Sidford, along which runs a shady river-side avenue known as the Lovers' Walk. At Sidford a bridge crosses the river, and amongst much modern brick-work is a picturesque old farm and a few old houses, at one of which, dated 1574, Charles II is reputed to have secreted himself in a ' priest's hole ' after his escape from Charmouth. From the steep acclivity of Trow Hill on the east, over which the road to Seaton runs, a striking view of the Sid valley can be secured. The road up the vale proceeds to Honiton through the old-world village of Sidbury. The branching valley is charmingly varied, and on its western side is overlooked by an isolated and tree-clad hill on the summit of which is Sidbury ' castle ', a prehistoric encampment surrounded by two lofty ramparts. The village of Sidbury lies at the foot of the hill. The church is a cruciform building with a reconstructed western tower carrying a spire. On the western face of the tower are two niches in which some large effigies, found elsewhere, have been inserted. There is a recess in the south external wall of the chancel and some diaper work below the east window. The interior likewise exhibits some early work, for it has Transition-Norman piers and some Norman windows, the

heads of which are hewn out of single stones. Below the chancel floor and entered by a trap door is a small crypt. The chamber above the porch is locally known as 'the powder room' from the fact that during the Napoleonic scare it was used as a magazine.

Up a lane leading from the Honiton road is Sand, built in 1594 and once the seat of the Huishes but now a farm. A cross-road from the lower end of Sidbury effects a junction with the road to Exeter, which climbs over an intervening ridge and descends into the wide valley of the Otter. Strung along the Exeter road beyond the bridge over the Otter is the long village of Newton Poppleford, so called from the pebbles abounding in its soil. Its rather uninteresting church stands behind the houses. A little to the north of Newton and overhanging the river are the Harpford woods, a shady retreat much frequented by Sidmouth excursionists. Harpford Church is small but has a good tower. It is chiefly notable for its connexion with Augustus Toplady, who was incumbent here from 1766 till 1768, and to whose memory the old churchyard cross has been re-erected. The neighbouring village of Ven (or Fen) Ottery has likewise a small church, containing some bench-ends carved with initials. The church at Tipton is modern.

Seaton shares with Sidmouth a fine expanse of limpid sea and shows a similar fondness for running away from it. But Seaton has not its neighbour's excuse of cramped quarters for forsaking its shore. It has a generous breadth of beach. The Axe, unlike the modest Sid, has excavated for its display a spacious valley through some low hills, and Seaton has placed itself at the mouth of this vale. The river, so far from incommoding it, has left it to enjoy its freedom, and has retired to the eastern side of the valley, and then squeezes itself through a narrow gap in the shingle beneath an overhanging cliff. The obstruction which the river meets with in disposing of its waters, transforms it at high tide into a long lagoon. From this the town shrinks away westwards and runs back inland over a

low ridge. Situated as it is at the mouth of this wide ventilating shaft Seaton enjoys a reputation for bracingness unusual on the South Devon seaboard. It has less picturesqueness than Sidmouth, but its extensive strand is flanked by some fine cliffs which have, however, a chill asperity in marked contrast to the warm tints of the Sidmouth bluffs. White Cliff, at the western extremity of the shore, is especially austere and impressive. It rises from the sea in cool grandeur like a marble precipice.

Seaton, in spite of its obvious modernity, claims for itself a very ancient origin. On a wall on the sea-front is painted like the name of a railway station the word ' Moridunum '. Moridunum was the name of a Roman military station in the west, but its situation has never been determined, so the claim must be taken for what it is worth. Seaton was, however, at any rate an ancient port, for in the fourteenth century it contributed two ships to the siege of Calais, which may be taken as some indication of its early maritime importance. Owing to the persistence with which the sea obstructs the outflow of the Axe, its sea-faring days have long since passed away. Even Leland could only refer to it as a derelict port. ' There hath been a very notable haven at Seaton,' he says, ' but now there lyeth between the two points of the haven a mighty rigge and barre of peble stones in the very mouth of it, and the river Axe driven to the est goith out there into the sea at a very small gut.' This description is equally applicable to the Seaton of to-day. The only antiquity which the town possesses is the church at its north extremity, and it is a peculiar rather than an engaging edifice. It has been reconstructed without any regard to symmetry. The nave is out of line with the chancel, and the tower is uncomformably placed with regard to the nave. In the north aisle is a passage squint and a monument with kneeling figures.

At Axmouth, on the other side of the river, is a much more interesting church. It has a Norman doorway and

a Transition-Norman arcade, two piers of which bear the remains of frescoes. On the north side of the chancel is the canopied effigy of a priest. Axmouth is a pretty village and lies on its river bank at the foot of Hawksdown, a flat-topped hill crowned by a prehistoric earthwork with two ramparts. The walk to Axmouth may profitably be extended by taking the Lyme Regis road as far as Rousdon. On the way a lane leads to the sixteenth-century manor-house of Bindon, once belonging to the Wykes, but afterwards the possession of Sir Walter Erle, the Parliamentary officer. It retains its domestic chapel. To the north of the road is Combe Pyne, a village squeezed into a long narrow valley below Musbury Castle. It has a small thirteenth-century church with a saddle-back tower and a queer little font. Rousdon is a modern mansion in a fine situation with a reconstructed church in its grounds. To the north-east of Rousdon is Uplyme, a Devonshire outpost on the Dorset border, unmistakably Devonian in its verdancy, lying with its church embosomed in trees on the gentle slope of a valley. The special object of the journey to Rousdon, however, is to give the visitor an opportunity of seeing the Dowland landslip, which is one of the most notable curiosities of the neighbourhood. For this purpose he will have to return to Seaton by the coast. The landslip occurred on Christmas Day 1839, and was caused by water percolating through the chalk cliffs and washing out the underlying greensand. It caused a great sensation in the locality, for the earth suddenly clave asunder and 'two cottages and their surroundings went down into the abyss, and a permanent chasm was formed more than 300 feet broad, 150 feet deep, and nearly a mile in length.' To some coastguards on duty at Culverhole Point who witnessed the occurrence, it must have seemed a rum business. They probably wondered whether they had been celebrating Christmas with more freedom than discretion or the end of the world had really come. 'They observed the sea to be in an extraordinary state of agitation; the beach on which

they stood rose and fell, amidst the breakers near the shore something dark appeared to be rising from the bottom of the sea, and around them resounded the deafening noise of crashing rocks.' Other landslips have sinced occurred in the vicinity. A path along the bottom of the fissure will take the traveller through this scene of topsy-turvy desolation. It is a rather weird spectacle, for the chasm, though now largely overgrown with trees and scrub, still presents a disordered scene of riven cliffs and tumbled rocks,

> So wonderous wild the whole might seem
> The fabric of a fairy dream.

An uphill and winding road to the west of the town will take the visitor to Beer, celebrated for its sparkling white cliffs and valuable quarries. It lies crowded together and almost entombed at the bottom of a deep cleft in the cliffs and faces a pretty strip of shore. A miniature promenade overlooks the bathing beach, and above it on the cliff are the Jubilee Gardens. Like Seaton, Beer was once a small port whose decay Leland laments. ' There was begon a fair Pere for socour of shippes at this Berewood,' he says, ' but there cam such a Tempest a 3 yeres sin as never in mynd of man had before beene sene on that shore, and tear the Pere in peaces.' Beer Head, ' a far projecting precipice ', is one of the finest and most conspicuous promontories on the coast and commands an extensive seascape. There is a small Tudor house in the village, and a mile or so to the north-west is Bovey, an Elizabethan manor-house, once one of the seats of the Walronds of Bradfield, which Polwhele somewhat vaguely described as ' an antique mansion, with a rookery, a mossy pavement to the court and a raven in the porch '. In its grounds is a well, with, it is said, a recess half-way down the shaft. The quarries of the famous Beer stone, of which Exeter Cathedral is built, are by the side of the road to Branscombe. The old quarries are now merely heaps of grass-grown debris, but are honeycombed by labyrinthine

galleries. The present quarries form a precipitous scarp on the opposite side of the road, likewise tunnelled. The stone, a fine white freestone, occurs at the junction of the chalk and greensand, and is obtained by underground excavation. Though easily worked when first procured, it quickly hardens on exposure. Branscombe (which can also be reached by a track along the coast) is a typical Devonshire village of thatched cottages, lying secluded in a deep valley ' where welcome hills shut out the universe '. The glen down which ' a gurgling streamlet flows ' opens upon a beach. The church, dedicated to St. Winfrid, the famous Boniface, is at the top of the combe and is much in keeping with its rural surroundings. It is a cruciform building with a central tower, and is old-fashioned enough to retain a three-decker pulpit, its Laudian altar rails and a west gallery. It has also some interesting medieval features, for there are a triple sedilia and a piscina in the chancel, whilst beneath the usual chancel windows on each side is another small window closed with a shutter. There is a stone coffin in the nave and in each of the transepts is a mural monument with kneeling figures. The one on the north is that of Joan Tregarthen (1581), who married as her second husband John Wadham of Meryfield, and in addition to her existing family of twelve became the mother of other five children of whom one was Nicholas Wadham, the founder of Wadham College at Oxford. The monument of Mary Bulleid (1606), in the opposite transept, has some beautiful Renaissance details. On Berry Head are an entrenchment and some barrows, whilst beneath the cliffs extends a rude terrace compacted of

> Crags, knolls and mounds, confusedly hurled
> And on the shore in masses thrown

by a landslip.

There still remains for the visitor to Seaton a ramble through the town to the quaint old town of Colyton, which

has a curious cruciform church with a central tower surmounted by a rather stumpy octagonal lantern supported by flying buttresses. The church retains its Perpendicular chancel, but the nave was rebuilt in 1750. Its most striking feature is the large but not very elegant window which almost completely fills the west end. The aisles each end in a chapel enclosed by a stone screen of different design—one is Perpendicular and the other Jacobean. These chapels are the mausoleums of the two principal local families, the Poles and the Yonges, who are represented by some elaborate monuments. The monument, however, which attracts most attention is the diminutive effigy of a female under a Gothic canopy on the north side of the chancel and is popularly known as 'Little Chokabone'. It is said to represent Margaret Courtenay, a granddaughter of Edward IV, who was choked by a fish-bone at Colcombe Court in 1512. It bears the arms of the Courtenays, but is probably a memorial of a heart interment. In the south transept is an inscription to John Wilkins (1662), the non-comforming minister of the parish who was ejected at the Restoration. There are two fine candelabra in the church. The vicarage was built by Dr. Brerewood, the donor of one of the screens, in 1529, and bears over its porch the motto 'Meditatio tolum, Peditatio tolum' ('Think all day, walk alway'). There is a gabled Grammar School near the church, dated 1611. The Great House in the main street, entered by a flint-set archway, was the former mansion of the Yonges, and was erected in the sixteenth century, but has been largely rebuilt. The Duke of Monmouth, in his 'western progress', was entertained here by the Yonges, who were merchants, but subsequently rose to importance in the State. Sir William (*d.* 1757) was Secretary for War and possessed the invaluable official faculty of being 'able to talk agreeably about nothing'. His son, Sir George, who filled the same post and was Master of the Mint, had the equally usual official incapacity 'to make both ends meet'. He is said to have

declared that he had a private fortune of £80,000, another of £80,000 from his wife, and had received a third £80,000 from his government appointments, but that Honiton, which he represented in Parliament, had swallowed the lot. He died in poverty in 1812 and was secretly buried in the churchyard lest his creditors should seize his body. The Poles, in the reign of Elizabeth, purchased Colcombe Court, built originally by the Courtenays but left incomplete. It was rebuilt by Sir William Pole, the antiquary. In 1644 it was used by Prince Maurice as his head-quarters, and is thought to have been destroyed during his military operations in the district. A farm near the railway bridge on the Axminster road now occupies the site, but some ruined walls of the old castle survive and in a neighbouring field is the castle well.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEIGN VALLEY

By breezy hills
And soft retiring dales, by smiling lawns,
By towns and villages and mansions fair
And rocks magnificent.

THE TEIGN, though on a rather smaller scale, is as beautiful a river as the Exe. It is a tortuous torrent pursuing its way from the moors to the sea through a deep and narrow valley, wooded and wild by turns and full of changeful surprises. Its estuary stretches as a long lake-like expanse beneath dappled and dimpled slopes all the way from Newton Abbot to Teignmouth where it squeezes itself between the town and its transpontine suburb of Shaldon and falls into the channel under a rouged and retroussé promontory known as the Ness. Keats summed up the amenities of the Teign estuary in some playful lines :

For there's Bishop's Teign,
And King's Teign,
And Combe at the clear Teign-head,
Where close by the stream
You may have your cream
All spread upon barley bread.

The poet was no doubt regaled with this characteristic Devon fare at Combe Cellars where a little inn, the scene of Baring Gould's *Kitty Alone*, overhangs the river. Bishop's Teignton stands half hidden in foliage on the hill-side opposite. Its church exhibits some Norman doorways and a rudely sculptured tympanum, whilst in a cleft behind it are the ruins of an episcopal palace enlarged by Bishop Grandisson but now turned into a cow-shed. King's

Teignton is a large industrial village flourishing on some neighbouring quarries and clay-fields and possessed of little antiquarian interest. Combe-in-Teignhead and Stoke-in-Teignhead are two little villages wedged into some green combes behind Combe Cellars. Each has a church with some good screenwork, and at Stoke there is a brass of an ecclesiastic. Newton Abbot is picturesquely grouped below some hills at the head of the estuary, where the Teign and its little tributary the Lemon form a sort of delta. It is a large and growing town chiefly known to the tourist as a railway junction where the travelling public is sorted for Torquay and Plymouth. As its name in part implies it is of no considerable antiquity. Originally it was neither an ecclesiastical unit nor a civil entity, but was distributed as the two distinct townships of Newton Abbot and Newton Bushel between the adjoining parishes of Woolborough and High Week. Oddly enough, though the ecclesiastical control ceased with the dissolution of Torre Abbey, the ecclesiastical title has prevailed and the modern town which has sprung up at the junction of the two townships is known as the Abbot's Newton. It owes its importance not only to its convenience as a railway and market centre but to the extensive clay-fields with which it is connected. But for the visitor its chief attraction is its sylvan surroundings. For there are

> Majestic woods, of every vigorous green
> Stage above stage high waving o'er the hills

behind it. Historically, Newton Abbot is noteworthy as the place where William of Orange first published his Declaration as a claimant to the crown, and the base of the market cross from which the document was read still stands in front of the solitary tower of St. Leonard's Chapel in the centre of the town. Forde, where the prince was lodged, a gabled Jacobean mansion, which the Reynells had previously thrown open to Charles I and his court, stands near the station. Macaulay gives a rather acid account of

William's entertainment there by its absent occupier, Sir William Courtenay: 'The Prince was magnificently lodged and feasted, but it is remarkable that the owner of the house, though a strong Whig, did not choose to be the first to put his life and fortune in peril and cautiously abstained from doing anything which, if the king should prevail, could be treated as a crime.' Yet there was surely nothing 'remarkable' in the host's not caring to lose his head to provide his guest with a crown. Amongst the woods which 'grace the hills' behind Forde 'with their forest charms' is Haccombe, the seat of the Carews, a flat-fronted structure placed against a leafy background at the top of a glade. By the side of it is a small towerless thirteenth-century church containing a stone screen, a little ancient glass, some interesting effigies and a series of finely engraved brasses. Nailed to the west doors, which are made of solid blocks of oak, are two horseshoes, placed there according to tradition as mementoes of an escapade in which one of the Carews and one of the Champernownes for a wager swam their horses in Tor Bay, when the former not only won his bet but saved the life of his companion. The road to St. Marychurch, which passes in front of the park, cuts through a large entrenchment with a square as well as a circular rampart. It commands a fine view of the town with its Dartmoor background, and in it William of Orange parked his artillery when dining at Forde. Woolborough Church on a ridge above the town makes an extensive show of screenwork and contains a monument of the Reynells of Forde. At High Week, mounted on a hill on the opposite side of the Lemon, there is a castle mound with a small outer bailey. From the churchyard a good view up the valley of the Teign can be secured. Those who desire to traverse 'the verdurous gloom and winding mossy ways' of Newton's chief scenic asset, the Bradley woods, must pursue the banks of the Lemon below High Week, where a 'single ridge of narrow path between the sullen river and the woods' leads in the direction of East Ogwell.

The Lemon, now sadly defiled as it flows through the town might there sing like the Nith:

> There was a time, it's nae long syne,
> Ye might have seen me in my pride,
> When all my banks sae bravely saw
> Their woody pictures in my tide,
> When hanging beech and spreading elm
> Shaded my stream sae clear and cool,
> And stately oaks their twisted arms
> Threw broad and dark across the pool.

In a 'lawny dell' near the entrance to the woods is Bradley Manor, the ancient seat of the Bushels, a low fifteenth-century house retaining only the hall and chapel of its original quadrangle. 'Glinting through the trees' below 'the cot', at the termination of the walk is a picturesque old mill. There are several interesting villages in the vicinity of Newton. At Kingskerswell, on the Torquay road, are some slight remains of a castle of the Dinhams, who have some effigies in its church. Abbots Kerswell, on the Totness road, has a church with a screen and a much mutilated image of the Virgin, and an old church house. Ipplepen has a spacious church with a fine screen and carved pulpit. There are an interesting screen and pulpit at Torbrian which was the birthplace in 1505 of the 'willowy' Sir William Petre. There is some screenwork again at Broad Hempston, whilst at Denbury are some slight remains of a monastery, a cell of Tavistock Abbey, embodied in a private residence, and a dome-shaped hill crowned by an encampment with a double rampart.

The valley of the Teign for some distance above Newton is a flat-bottomed basin rendered hideous by a continuous series of clay pits and made malodorous by the fumes of smouldering lignite turned up in the course of the operations. The vale, however, resumes its picturesqueness where it narrows. Standing in an open and pleasant situation on a ledge of the Haldon range and overhanging the valley, is the old but now modernized town of

Chudleigh, once noted for its woollens. It is strung upon the main road from Exeter to Plymouth and has an aspect of breezy salubrity. Fairfax lodged in the town during his military operations in the district, and William of Orange, on his way to Exeter, addressed the populace from a window. The only antique features of Chudleigh are its church which contains a screen and a monument of Sir Piers Courtenay (1567), and a Jacobean house with a projecting porch, though in an orchard near the church are some slight remains of an episcopal palace, built by Bishop Ocbert in the twelfth century. The great ' show-sight ' of Chudleigh, however, is its rock, a limestone cliff overlooking a wooded ravine below the ruined palace. It is a striking bit of scenery, rather like a section of the Cheddar gorge, less majestic, but more umbrageous, for the rock which is riven from top to bottom, rises precipitously from the leafy banks of a brawling torrent foaming amongst the boulders below.

> The cliff that rear'd its haughty head
> High o'er the river's darksome bed,
> Was now all naked, wild and grey,
> Now waving all with greenwood spray.
> Here trees to every crevice clung
> And o'er the glen their branches hung,
> And there, all splintered and uneven,
> The lofty rock ascends to heaven.

The bones of extinct animals have been found in a cavern at its base. but it has now become the haunt of the pixies. To the south of Chudleigh is Ugbrook Park, an extensive demesne enclosing a large lake and a prehistoric earthwork. The mansion was built by Thomas Clifford, Charles II's Lord Treasurer, who issued the abortive Declaration of Indulgence in 1672. Dryden was a frequent visitor at Ugbrook, and dedicated his version of Virgil's *Georgics* to his host's son Hugh. Below Chudleigh the Teign flows through a narrow and richly variegated valley, on the sides of

which hang one or two interesting villages. High on the top of a hill opposite is Hennock, a quarryman's village with an old inn fronted by a gabled porch, and a church with a screen. Hennock has had some queer parsons. One, named Harris, enjoyed considerable local repute as a wizard, on account of his ability to trace lost property, but he seems to have relied more on his shrewdness than his magic to support his claims. A man who complained that he had lost a gander had it charmed through the parsonage window ready trussed for dinner. On another occasion three geese mysteriously disappeared from a farm-yard. On the following Sunday the parson announced from the pulpit that he had conjured that three goose feathers should forthwith appear on the nose of the thief. When a member of the congregation put up his hand to feel his nose, this Sherlock Holmes at once declared: 'You's the man, but he's moulted for very shame.' When another parson died, his son, who was not ordained, coolly stepped into his office with the connivance of the parishioners, who thought he would lower their tithes in consequence of this informality. When, however, the expectation was not realized they denounced him. 'Us may as well have a real shepheard to shear us, if thickey veller goith for to clip us so close,' they declared.

There are a couple of fine old houses, now farms, in the Teign valley, both of which were attacked and captured by Fairfax. One is Barton below Trusham, the ancient home of the Chudleighs, and the other is Canon Teign, once the seat of the Davies, near Lower Ashton. Trusham Church, poised on a ridge overlooking the village in a dingle below, is a Perpendicular building reared apparently on the foundations of an earlier edifice. It contains the monuments of Hugh Staplehill (1583) and John Stooke (1697), the latter represented by a painted portrait. At Lower Ashton is a picturesque old bridge, and at the top of a retreating combe, amongst a pretty cluster of cottages, is Higher Ashton Church, which contains a good screen, some

carved bench-ends, an Elizabethan pulpit, and a wooden monument of Sir George Chudleigh (1657).

Behind Higher Ashton and at the foot of the Belvedere tower, which forms a very conspicuous landmark, is Doddiscombsleigh Church, where there is a profuse display of ancient glass; whilst at Dunchideock, on the other side of the tower, there is a good screen and a monument of General Lawrence (1775), the 'father of the Indian Army'. There are two other churches in the Teign valley which have some old woodwork. Christow Church, lying amongst a nest of white cottages in the vale has a screen, and in the threshold of the south doorway is a slab to Walter Bassett (1632), the parish clerk, who is said to have been shot in an effort to defend the church from desecration and to have been buried where he fell. Bridford Church, perched high on a hill-side down which a brook glissades, has an interesting but imperfect screen and a painted pulpit. The Teign bends round the hill on which Bridford stands, and poised on the ridge above the valley is Heltor, a conspicuous mass of rock. Charmingly situated near the banks of the river below Heltor is Dunsford, where there are some quaint-looking cottages and a church containing an effigy of Sir Thomas Fulford (1639), above which are suspended a sword and helmet. Great Fulford, a quadrangular Tudor mansion, lies in a large undulating park to the north-east, but is entirely screened from observation. It was captured by Fairfax in 1645, and the redoubts thrown up by the Roundheads still remain in the grounds.

Above Dunsford the more romantic beauties of the Teign commence. At Clifford's bridge it emerges from a wooded gorge overhung by the prehistoric entrenchment of Wooston 'Castle', into a wider valley amid surroundings of great charm; but the more famous beauty spot of Fingle bridge lies in the centre of the gorge. A bare glen, threaded by a stream, converges near the bridge upon the ravine of the Teign, which is here thickly draped with woods. It is this combination of these heather-crested slopes and the

FINGLE BRIDGE

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rich but sombre greenery of the wooded gorge through which the twisted river slides from slab to slab that makes the scene so striking. Blackmore considered Fingle bridge ' one of the finest things to look at in the west of England '. Two prehistoric earthworks—Cranbrook ' Castle ' and Prestonbury—overlook the ravine from opposite sides, and in the bed of the river higher up is a logan stone. Though the prettily-placed hamlet of Sandypark lies more immediately upon the river near another bridge beyond the Fingle gorge, the last of the Teign villages to merit attention is Drewsteignton, situated on a hill-top high above the ravine. Drewsteignton's claim to attention, however, is not in anything which the village itself has to show, but in its proximity to the Spinster's Rock, the only complete cromlech in Devon ; and even it is not in its original condition, for it was overthrown in a thunderstorm some years ago and has been replaced. It stands about two and a half miles west of the village in a field by the road-side. The capstone, a huge block of granite some eighteen feet square, is poised on three supports. On the opposite side of the road, and walled in by matted shrubs, is Bradmere pool, a gloomy-looking pit, the legacy of some abandoned tin-streaming works,

> in whose recess
> The water has slept for many a year
> Unchanged and motionless.

CHAPTER IX

DARTMOOR

Yea! a desert wide and wasted
Washed by rain floods to the bones;
League on league of heather blasted,
Storm-gash'd moss, grey boulder stones;
East and west and northward sweeping,
Limitless the mountain plain,
Like a vast low heaving ocean,
Girded by its mountain chain.

J. C. Shairp

AT Newton Abbot the visitor receives his first impression of Dartmoor, for the town has for its background the south-eastern rampart of the moor. But if he has only seen it from Newton he can claim no more than a bowing acquaintance with the great Devonshire highland. The view of it, however, from this distant vantage-ground will enable him to form some idea of its stern and rugged character, for its rock-crowned heights

Bear on their broad flanks right into the mists
Vast sweeps of purple heath and yellow furze.

But he will be quite unable to realize the weirdness of these 'wilds stupendous'. 'I turned off in the direction of Dartmoor,' wrote Elihu Barrett more than half a century ago, 'with something of the same misgiving which I felt on entering the mammoth caves of Kentucky.' The tales of its uncanny solitudes daunted him. The advent of the motor-car has changed all that. It has transformed Dartmoor from a lone inaccessable land into a picnic rendezvous for gleeful trippers. The moor is now Devonshire's popular playground. In the summer automobiles of every

description career along its two arterial highways in endless succession ; petrol vapour adds a deeper tint to the purple haze of its atmosphere ; cars are parked by scores around all its beauty spots, and people are seen gaily gipsying everywhere amongst the heather, to the accompaniment of gramophones and portable wireless sets. But if the remoteness of the moor has gone, its uniqueness remains ; there is nothing quite like it elsewhere. Our island abounds in extensive wilds. There are the Scotch Highlands, the Welsh hills, the Cumberland fells, and the Yorkshire moors ; but Dartmoor is more than a wilderness : it is a sort of primeval chaos where the earth has been denuded of its covering and laid bare to the bone. It is ' a land upheaved from the abyss, where fragments of forgotten people dwelt '. It is the largest exposed mass of granite in the country. It measures twenty miles by eighteen, and covers an area, roughly speaking, of 100,000 acres. It is remarkable not only for its extent but for its altitude and its freakish conformation. It stands 1,000 feet above sea-level, and is upheaved into a multitude of hills—some of which rise to over 2,000 feet—crowned by fantastic masses of rock, called tors. There are, it is said, 170 of these weird granite outcrops on the moor. Though the Dartmoor hills are not mountains, they have what Ruskin calls ' the sublimity of mountain distances ', for ' the whole tone of the landscape is coloured by the introduction of those large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple which we owe to mountains '. This wild and extensive region, with its tors and cleaves, is not only in itself one of the most impressive sights in the county, but it is also responsible for much of the diversified beauty of the rest of the shire. As has already been said, Devonshire owes a great deal of its loveliness to its rivers, and the majority of these streams are nursed on the bosom of the moor. Dartmoor is Devonshire's great watershed, and in its hollows lie the granite-bottomed bogs where the rivers have their birth. The number and variety of its tors, the beauty of its

glens and stone-strewn gorges, and its wealth of prehistoric antiquities make it one of the most fascinating districts in the county for the rambler, and no other locality has received more attention from the artist, the author, the antiquary, and the angler than these extensive and desolate Devonshire uplands. Now the public has discovered Dartmoor and turned it into a kind of natural park. Dartmoor has had many eulogists of one sort or another who have sought to glorify it with pen or pencil. Water-colourists depict it in purple tones and word-painters portray it in a profusion of purple patches. Even its dour climate is not without its admirers. It is claimed to ' combine the softness of the southern sea with the tonic properties of mountain air '. But the tourist should not be misled by all ' this frippery of random praise ' into imagining it a sort of Highland paradise. The truth is that, great and grand though it is, there is something of the drear aspect of the desert about it. Except in a few central spaces where a comprehensive view of its extent can be obtained, its scenery is more impressive than intriguing, and its outskirts are far more beautiful than the moor itself. The moor is a vast undulating and almost treeless expanse of grass and furze, dappled with patches of heather and bracken, littered with boulders, furrowed by watercourses, and chequered in places with wide strips of cultivated land. Like the sea, ' vast, varied, and in all its forms sublime ', the moor borrows much of its beauty from the sky. It has everywhere the subtle charm of atmosphere,

> Its colours changing, when from cloud and sun
> Shades after shades upon its surface run.

In the twilight it is often exquisitely tinted

> With a soft and purple mist
> Like a vaporous amethyst.

In the late summer the mingled hues of the furze and

heather and the glint of the variegated bracken give it the appearance of mottled copper, but at other times, save for the changing lights which flit across its surface, there is something depressing and monotonous in this rolling and unending sea of sombre green, with its crested tors like foam-crowned breakers. When not brightly illuminated it is melancholy, under lowering skies it is menacing, and at all times it is eerie. The true ' Demsher volk be properly mazed 'bout the moor '. To them it is a ' wisht ' and bewildering region of bog and heather, the boulder-strewn haunt of ' the pisgies, the lil' brown volk ' with whom it is never safe to meddle. At night-time demons lurk in the crevices of its rocks and fire-breathing hounds roam over its solitudes startling the belated traveller with their howls. But the skirts of the moor are always bewitching, for there the woods abound and the streams, which on the moor appear as mere silver threads drawn along its hollows, become brawling torrents, ploughing their way through glens and gorges of quite romantic beauty.

Dartmoor owes its chief peculiarity to the inconsistency of its granite rocks. Granite is a combination of quartz, mica, and felspar, and exhibits considerable differences of texture, owing to the fact that when mixed in the subterranean melting-pot its constituents were imperfectly blended. Felspar easily disintegrates, and where it predominates the rocks weather unequally. The perishing of the softer layers has left the harder and better mingled rocks exposed in great blocks heaped on one another like bales of merchandise, on the top of the tors, whilst below the tors are

> Rock chasms, and piles of loose stones
> Like the loose broken teeth
> Of some sea monster which climbed there to die
> From the ocean beneath.

These scenes of wastage are called ' clitters ', and they make the ascent of the tors very laborious. Occasionally

the rocks are sculptured by denudation into weird and fantastic shapes; sometimes they are scooped out into basins or left delicately poised as logans on the edge of a crag. The dust of the decomposed granite has in the course of centuries been washed down by streams into hollows, where it has settled and formed beds of clay, which are mined for the manufacture of porcelain or pottery.

Apart from these natural curiosities the moor abounds in relics of prehistoric life, for these wilds were once the abode of primitive man. Large numbers of these antiquities have been wantonly or ignorantly destroyed, but a good many still survive in a more or less perfect form. Hut circles are met with almost everywhere, but there is now only one enclosed village; kistvaens, barrows, menhirs, and cairns are numerous; there are several stone circles, about fifty stone rows or avenues, and one or two stone crosses. But Dartmoor itself possesses only one encampment, on White Tor. Its hills were its earthworks.

Most of the prehistoric relics on Dartmoor are of small size, and in so large and much-encumbered an area are difficult to locate. In his search for them the wayfarer will often find himself 'a foil'd circuitous wanderer'. Nor can he count on much local sympathy in his quest. When a native does not profess blank ignorance, he will wave his hand in a comprehensive gesture towards the whole of the moor and exclaim: 'Ut be over there; but what be going there for? It be only a vew wold stones. Us Dartymoor volk don't never think 'bout such things.'

The Dartmoor climate is another discouraging feature with which the traveller has to reckon. The moor seems to be Devonshire's metereological laboratory, where the elements compound their most disconcerting productions for the discomfiture of the inexperienced wayfarer.

> It is the home of rivers and the haunt
> Of great cloud armies, borne on ocean's blasts
> Out of the wide-Atlantic wilderness.

The rainfall is considerable ; when it rains it pours, and it frequently rains on the moor when it is fine elsewhere. Mists sweep over the hills with great suddenness and are extremely baffling in their intensity ; whilst the snow lingers on the tors weeks after it has disappeared from the lowlands. Of the other perils of the moor the bogs are the worst. The old stock story is that a man saw a hat lying on a patch of vivid green and took, in sportive fashion, a running kick at it, whereupon a muffled voice beneath exclaimed : ' What be doing with my 'at ? ' The stranger in astonishment asked : ' Be there a head under ut then ? ' ' Ees fay, zure 'nuff there be,' replied the voice, ' and a harse under that.'

On this wild and inhospitable region are to be found scattered hamlets, isolated farms, and large tracts of land which have been wrested from the moor. A large portion of the eastern border has been entirely reclaimed. At the Norman conquest the whole of this barren wilderness was annexed to the crown as a royal forest and devoted to the purposes of the chase. In the reign of Henry III it was granted to Richard, Duke of Cornwall, and it is still in great part the property of the Duchy. From time immemorial there have been ancient tenements on the moor, and by concessions from time to time to the occupiers of these holdings and to other settlers, the limits of the royal preserve have been greatly reduced, and the technical ' forest ' now only comprises three-fifths of the moor. At one time the inhabitants of the whole of the county of Devon (except the parishes of Barnstaple and Totnes) had the right of removing from the forest what they needed, ' save venison and vert ', but the right is now restricted to the border parishes, and even these rights are now generally limited to rights of pasture and turbary. ' Ees,' said an old farmer, ' 'tis wisely ordered that us should have turve 'pon moor. 'Tis my belief 'twas washed up by Vlood, 'cos 'twas knawed us couldn' get no coals out here.' The wild deer which at one time roamed over the forest were

exterminated in the eighteenth century on account of the damage which they did to the neighbouring farmers by their depredations.

The mineral as well as the agricultural resources of the moor have been exploited from early times. Tin occurs in lodes among its rocks, and along the banks of the rivers are to be found the disfiguring debris of the workings and the ruins of the huts and blowing-houses of the old tin-streamers who obtained the metal by the simple process of washing out the particles from the disintegrated granite with which they were mixed. In the reign of Elizabeth the industry was actively pursued, and Spenser speaks of the Dart as 'nigh chok'd with sands of tinny mines'. The miners were a special class, exempt from the law of the realm, but under the jurisdiction of the Warden of the Stannaries, and the affairs of the guild to which they belonged were entirely regulated by an open-air miners' parliament held on Crokern Tor, whilst to maintain the standard purity of the metal, Lydford, Tavistock, Chagford, and Ashburton were made 'Stannary Towns', to which the tinners had to resort for the testing and stamping of their blocks.

The highest altitudes on Dartmoor are High Willhays (Willis) and Yes Tor, each of which exceeds 2,000 feet in height. Newtake, Cut Hill, and Great Lynx Tor are almost as high; whilst Fur Tor, Great Mis Tor, Hound Tor, Hey Tor, and Rippon Tor equal them in rugged picturesqueness. Vixen Tor is perhaps the most impressive rock mass on the moor. Cawsand (Cosdon) Beacon, Hameldon, and Amicombe Hill, though only 'Hogs' backs', are of considerable altitude and present bold outlines. Kes Tor (Castor) rock is much visited, and Bellever Tor is the popular pet of the moor. The rivers which owe their origin to Dartmoor are the far-famed Dart, the Taw, the Lyd, the Tavy, the Meavy, the Okement, the Plym, the Yealm, the Erme, the Avon, and the Teign. The Dart and the Teign are pre-eminent for their beauty, and the Lyd flows through the most romantic gorge in the county.

The moor by its tracklessness defies detailed directions for exploration. The tourist must be left for the success of his expeditions to the reliable guidance of a large-scale Ordnance map and a compass, and to the tender mercies of the weather. The chief sights are, however, fairly accessible. The Great Western and Southern Railways between them virtually circumscribe the moor, which can be attacked from any intermediate station along its rim. For the traveller who contents himself with merely crossing the moor Postbridge, which has been termed its ' prehistoric metropolis ', serves as a sort of caravansary in the desert. Entertainment on these wilds is otherwise far to seek. A belated wayfarer on inquiring of a moorman where he might secure a bed was told: ' You'm vourteen mile from Princetown Prison, and vourteen mile from Blackdon 'Sylum and vourteen mile from Newton Warkhus. Mebbe you'd get a lodging at any of them places—and sootable.' Another traveller, when calling for refreshment at a lonely cottage, was attracted by a large chest. On opening it he found to his horror that it contained a corpse. The serving girl said reassuringly: ' 'Tis only feyther. 'Twere mortal cold when 'er died, so us salted un down.' On Amicombe Hill are two boulders popularly known as Bronescombe's Loaf and Cheese. It is said that the bishop when crossing the moor in company with his chaplain found himself fainting and foodless on the hill. ' Would that I had power in this wilderness to turn stones into bread,' he murmured. ' And a hunch of cheese,' added the hungry chaplain more boldly. At the words a limping peasant was seen approaching with a wallet slung over his shoulder. With a show of churlishness he consented to supply the needs of the famished travellers if they would but doff their caps to him. The cloven hoof of course betrayed him, and at the sign of the cross the tempter threw down his provisions and vanished, and the loaf and cheese remain uneaten to-day.

Postbridge is a scattered collection of houses in a green and pleasant valley on the banks of the East Dart and

almost at the foot of Bellever Tor, the central boss of the moor. Below the modern bridge across the river is an old and picturesque clapper bridge. On the top of Lakehead Hill, to the south-west of Postbridge on the way to Bellever Tor, is a specially fine kistvaen surrounded by a small circle of stones, to which a short avenue is attached; whilst by the side of the road from Postbridge to Widecombe, near a plantation, is a stone circle surrounding a buried kistvaen. An arresting view of 'the purple rim' of the moor is unfolded from the top of the ascent to Moreton, near a weather-worn cross, for the valley of the Dart lies below, and round it the hills are very impressively grouped. Four miles south-east of Two Bridges, on the farther side of Fox Tor mire, and at the foot of Fox Tor, is Childe's tomb, a modern cross mounted on some ancient stones covering a kistvaen. To it a grim story is attached. Childe was a Plymstock man who was overtaken during a hunting expedition on the moor by a snowstorm. Finding himself chilled, and fearing lest he should be frozen to death, he killed his horse, cut open its body and crept inside it.

> And with his finger dipped in blood
> He scrabbled on the stones,
> 'This is my will, which God fulfil,
> And buried be my bones.
> Who'er it be that findeth me
> And brings me to a grave,
> The lands that now belong to me
> In Plymstock he shall have.

The body was found and word sent to Plympton Priory, where the monks set about preparing for the unfortunate man's interment. But the monks of Tavistock, who also had got wind of the affair, were too sharp for them. Dispensing with ceremony, they set out for the moor, snatched up the body, threw a couple of planks across the Tavy to evade opposition, and had poor Childe safely stowed away in their cemetery before their brethren of Plympton, who

An extensive view is obtained from Hey Tor. In the distance, to the north, will be seen the long ridge of Hound Tor, crowned at each extremity by some imposing granite crags, over which on dark winter nights career the fire-breathing wisht-hounds. To the south of Hey Tor is Rippon Tor, one of the most prominent and shapely summits on the moor. On a slab of rock on its southern face a cross has been incised, it is supposed, by the monks of Buckfast Abbey, and amongst a pile of rocks between the summit and the Ashburton road is a large and nicely balanced logan stone. On the west of Hay Tor the road drops down by a gradient of one in five into the valley of the Webburn. Lying in a verdant oasis in the valley at the foot of the smoothly swelling slopes of Hameldon is Widecombe (Widdycombe)-in-the-Moor. It is

> A green and silent spot amid the hills,
> O'er stiller place no singing lark e'er poised himself,

except on fairdays, or when the summer trippers from Teignmouth and Torquay flock out by hundreds in charabancs. At the entrance of the village is a prize sign-board illustrating an incident in the famous old Devonshire song which has immortalized the village and furnished Mr. Eden Phillpotts with a title for his novel *Widecombe Fair.*

Though buried in the wilds, the village, with its ' decent church ', its cluster of homely dwellings, its green,

> And hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade
> For talking age and whispering lovers made,

presents a picture of Auburn-like simplicity and repose. In winter, however, there is nothing idyllic in the situation of Widecombe. ' Widecombe in the cold country ' is what the south coast people say with a shrug of their shoulders and a shiver ; and when it snows they declare that ' Widecombe folk are plucking their geese '. At the entrance to

the graveyard is a charming row of fifteenth-century almshouses fronted by a colonnade. The church, locally known as the cathedral of the Moors, has a fine granite tower, said to have been built by the tin-streamers of the district. The roof of the earlier nave has had in part to be lifted to accommodate the spring of the arch. Beneath the belfry is a board with a rhyming account of the havoc wrought in the church by a thunderstorm in 1638, when a ball of fire entered the church and four persons were killed and sixty-two injured. Prince declares that ' the stones were thrown down from the steeple as if a hundred men were demolishing it '. Previously to the storm a traveller clad in black and dismounting from a coal-black horse called at a wayside tavern for something to drink. The woman who served him observed that ' the liquor went hissing down his throat ' and that he made an ineffectual effort to conceal a misshapen foot. A road runs up the Webburn valley by which the traveller can get to Manaton. On the side of Heyne Down, near Manaton, is Bowerman's Nose, a fantastic granite pillar like the head of an ape in a shovel hat. Manaton is another quiet and secluded village but lacking the sheltered serenity of Widecombe, for it stands high on the outskirts of the moor. It too has a pleasant green bordered by avenues of lime and oak. The church, which stands at one end of it, has a tall tower, a vaulted porch, and a good screen. Snakes, or ' long cripples ', are said to have once infested the neighbourhood, and ' fancy worked upon by fear ' gave the locality the reputation of being haunted by a sort of dragon of Wantley. By the side of the road to Bovey, a mile below Manaton, are the Becka Falls, where a babbling rivulet precipitates itself down the hill-side amongst a confused mass of weedy boulders overhung by ' weeping woods '.

The most notable beauty spot in the neighbourhood of Bovey Tracey is Lustleigh Cleave, higher up the Bovey valley at the foot of Manaton. The village of Lustleigh is not in its cleave, but is scattered about amongst the trees

in an adjoining combe. It is an unstudied combination of rustic cottages and intricate lanes, smothered in foliage, and possesses at one end a fourteenth-century manor-house retaining its hall, and at the other a quaint collection of thatched dwellings grouped around the seventeenth-century manor-house of Wreylands. The church in the centre of the village has an interesting late screen with carved figures on its panels, a parclose, and the effigies of two knights and a lady, all representing members of the Prouze family. Some of the windows retain their original glass, and on the floor of the porch is a worn inscribed stone. The Cleave is reached by a lane winding up the slope of the hill behind the village and opening upon a heath encumbered by fantastic masses of rock. Perched on the brow of the hill, and overlooking the Cleave, is a huge block of granite crowned by a logan stone known as the Nutcracker. The Cleave is a long, curved valley through which the Bovey river winds below some woods. A path behind the Nutcracker leads down a bare slope to a clapper bridge across the torrent, called Horsham Steps, and across it the path runs up the opposite hill to Manaton, whose church tower is seen rising above the trees in the background.

Moreton Hampstead is another of the principal gateways of the moor. Unlike Bovey Tracey, it stands very high, and from it the great central road runs across the moor to Princetown and Tavistock. Except for the fact that it keeps, so to speak, the key of the moor, there is not much to interest the visitor in Moreton itself. It is a prettily situated but rather bleak-looking little town. It has a large but featureless fifteenth-century church whose screen was ejected and dismembered in 1857, and its fragments distributed, it is said, between Powderham and Whitchurch. In an adjoining street is a quaint row of thatched and colonnaded almshouses, dated 1637, and near them a recently planted tree occupies the place of a large elm, known as ' the dancing tree ', round and on which were held the village revels. ' Instead of putting up a May-pole,'

says Blackmore, ' and frolicking around it in a pixy-ring, the young folk of Moreton had their frisks without dread of dewy feet. High up in the tree which stands at the elbow of a scraggy street they hoisted and fixed a timber platform strong enough to bear the vehemence of feet not too aerial.' The tree ended its dancing days in 1904, when it was blown down. At the foot of its successor has been laid the head of the village cross, whose place the dancing tree had usurped. George Bidder, ' the calculating boy,' was born at Moreton Hampstead in 1805. His father was the local blacksmith, who found his son's brains a more efficient instrument for raising the wind than his own bellows. The lad was taken round the country for exhibition purposes as an arithmetical prodigy.

On the summit of a rounded hill behind Moreton is a dome-shaped mass of granite, the Blackistone, to which a grim story is attached. A young mother who lived in its vicinity heard the bells of Moreton ringing on the morning of the fair. Unable to resist the temptation she left her babe in its cradle and hurried away to the frolic. When she returned at night some ravens flew off to the rock, and only the bones of the infant were found in the cradle. Moreton is the nearest place from which to visit Grimspound, a prehistoric village, generally considered one of the most interesting antiquities on Dartmoor. It is some six miles to the south-west of Moreton and is reached from the Princetown road.

The pedestrian who does not mind an extra mile or two can work North Bovey into the journey. North Bovey lies on a slope above the Bovey river as it winds at the foot of Easdon, a peaked hill to the south-west of Moreton. It is a pretty group of thatched cottages clustered round an oak-studded green on which stands an old Latin cross. North Bovey has a fourteenth-century church containing a fine Perpendicular screen, with its parcloses, and a few old bench-ends. The rood beam still remains in the chancel, and on the bosses of the roof are said to be the heads of

GRIMSPOUND, AND ENTRANCE

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The principal avenue, which is of great length, may be traced through the furze to a large menhir, beyond which is a stone supposed to have once formed one of the supports of a dismantled cromlech popularly known as the 'Three Boys'. To the west of the Castor rock, the Teign flows across the open moor between the pillar-crowned heights of Wattern Tor and the slopes of Shovel Down. The river can be crossed by a clapper bridge, below which the Teign unites with the Walla Brook. In the bed of the river near their confluence is the Tolmen, a granite boulder completely perforated by a rock basin. A slab of granite is thrown across the brook, and at the base of the hill beyond is the Scaurhill circle consisting of twenty-three upright and four fallen stones. The brook and the river should be re-crossed and the course of the river followed southwards as far as the foot of Sittaford Tor, amongst the rocks on whose summit is a huge slab forming a logan stone. On the eastern slope of the tor, and discernible from its crest, are the Grey Wethers, two contiguous stone circles of large size, recently restored, one containing twenty-six stones and the other sixteen. They form a very impressive object and derive their name from their supposed resemblance to a flock of sheep. It is said that a 'greenhorn' once purchased a number of wethers in Tavistock market which he was to collect on Sittaford Tor. The wethers were there 'sure 'nuff' when he came to fetch them, and they are there still. From the Grey Wethers the traveller should make his way to Fernworthy Farm, in proximity to which, by the side of a wire fence, is another circle of twenty-two small stones with the fragment of a stone row adjoining it. Fernworthy Farm, which stands in a grove of sycamores, bears over its doorway its date, 1690. Beyond the farm is a bridge across the South Teign, the road over which will take the traveller back to Chagford.

To reach Gidleigh the wayfarer must again descend into the Teign valley by the road traversed on his previous journey, but must follow a different track when the road

forks near a factory. He will cross both the river and one of its tributaries. In Gidleigh Park is another beautiful section of the river, but the grounds are private. Gidleigh, though a mere hamlet in size possesses both a church and a castle. Gidleigh Church has a small screen, but little else of note. The castle stands in the garden of an adjoining house, and its ruins consist only of the ivy-mantled stump of a square tower. Its origin is obscure, but it is said to date from the fourteenth century, though it has what appear to be Norman windows. On Buttern Hill, to the west of the village, is another stone circle and a number of hut circles.

CHAPTER XI

TOR BAY

> And now for health they gained a coast
> All sand and cliff and deep inrunning cave.
>
> TENNYSON

TOR BAY is a fine crescent of 'dark blue ocean vaulted o'er with dark blue sky', with a cliff fringed and 'thymy promontory' at each extremity and a flattish shore in the middle. Torquay occupies one horn, Brixham the other, and Paignton lies in between. The three towns form a somewhat incongruous triad, but they are all the more interesting on account of their diversity, and each derives additional charm from its contrast with the others.

Torquay is, of course, the magnet which draws the travelling public to the vicinity of Tor Bay. It is generally regarded as the Queen of Devonshire watering-places, and as such receives its full share of popular homage. It is said to have first risen into notice during the Napoleonic wars, when the English fleets which watched the Channel were stationed in Tor Bay, and the wives and sweethearts of the officers came down to relieve the tedium of their vigil. Though thus a place of comparatively modern origin, it has for at least half a century basked in the sunshine of popular favour, and its popularity, so far from declining, is still steadily mounting towards its zenith. It has grown enormously in recent years, and now stretches in unbroken continuity from St. Mary Church on the north to Paignton on the South. The town originally sheltered itself in a shelving defile, the walls of which end seawards in two conical buttresses; but it has long overflowed this retreat and its residences and terraces are thickly strewn over the neighbouring hill-sides. Torquay is often called the

English Naples. Generally speaking, there is something far-fetched in these popular comparisons. An old lady who once remarked to Bishop Phillpotts, 'Torquay reminds me of the Alps,' received the dry reply: 'I have no doubt, madam, that you could trace some resemblances if you had lived in Switzerland during the Flood.' But, as a matter of fact, when viewed from the shore, with its brilliant atmosphere, its draped cliffs, its tiers of tree-embowered villas, its gay gardens, and its profusion of palms, there is something distinctly Mediterranean in its appearance. The town has no formal sea-front, for the valley in which it lies opens directly upon its doubly-enclosed harbour. It has, however, a sandy bathing strand skirted by the roadway, which serves the same purpose. Hazlitt complains that 'there are those who go to watering-places to forget the town and all that is in it, yet sometimes carry the metropolis with them'. There is nothing out-of-the-world about Torquay. It is stylish and fashionable as well as large. Except for the daily inundation of trippers it could vie with Bath in its severe gentility. But though there are one or two rather stiff terraces, there is no classical dignity about Torquay. It spreads itself with a sort of suburban freedom over the hill-sides; and in wandering about its rather involved roadways one might almost forget that it is a seaside place at all. By far its finest features are the series of grassy platforms which crown its cliffs and the number of brightly-tinted and precipitously-walled strands with which these bulwarks are indented. Pretty as its general aspect is, its prettiness is not its only attraction. It is endowed with a mild and equable climate to which it owes much of its reputation. 'All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone', but its rather enervating geniality is tempered with considerable local variations of temperature, due to differences of level. A sojourn at Torquay may be either a siesta or a strenuous experience according to the disposition of its guests. From its strands the visitor can lazily sit and

ANSTEY'S COVE, TORQUAY

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Watch the crisping ripples on the beach
And tender curling lines of spray,

or he can climb the hill-sides and from the cliffs look down upon the waves ' rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below '.

These cliff-edged downs provide the pedestrian with a very extensive rambling ground, and from them access can be gained to the numerous coves which furnish Torquay with its bathing-places and picnic rendezvous. A long marine drive puts the motorist in connexion with them all. There is a strand at Meadfoot, below the coastguard station on Daddy Hole Plain ; between Black Head and Wall's Hill are the ever-popular Anstey's Cove and Redgate Beach ; whilst facing Babbacombe is a trimly laid-out bit of greensward overlooking Babbacombe Bay with its little pier, and the charmingly coloured Oddicombe Beach. It may be said of the whole of the Torquay seaboard, ' sweet is the colour of cove and cave '. All the many inlets have a peculiar hue of their own, and owe their charm as much to nature's paintbox as to her chisel. At St. Mary Church, again, there is a cliff walk running along the edge of Pettitor Downs, which becomes a scrambling path leading down to a scene of picturesque disorder at the Watcombe landslip. The path can be pursued to a beach beyond, and then followed through some woods to Maidencombe, where there is another strand enclosed by rocks laid down with the regularity of courses of masonry.

Few English towns, however modern, are entirely destitute of traces of antiquity, and Torquay is no exception. One remnant of primitive times still survives in the heart of this assemblage of hotels, boarding-houses, and private residences. At the bottom of the valley on the western side of the town near the station is Torre Abbey, round which this great modern watering-place has crystallized. It was founded by Lord Bruere, the builder of Dunkeswell Abbey, in 1196, and was the wealthiest house which the Premonstratensian monks possessed in England. In

1662 it became the property of the Careys, who subsequently built upon its site a mansion. Some portions of the domestic buildings have, however, managed to survive. The fourteenth-century gateway, the refectory, a tower, and the entrance to the chapter-house are still standing, and a grange, known as 'the Spanish barn', is in the grounds. There are likewise the ruins of a thirteenth-century chapel on the top of Chapel Hill, facing Torre station at the upper end of the town. All the Torquay churches are modern, with the exception of the fifteenth-century church of Tor Mohun, which contains the brass of a lady (1581), and an effigy of John Ridgeway (1596), the abbey steward, who at its dissolution managed to secure a goodly share of the spoil.

Tor Abbey, however, is a very modern residence compared with Torquay's chief antiquity, Kent's cavern, which is one of the very oldest human habitations in the country. It is not far from the cliffs on the eastern side of the town, and is entered by a comparatively narrow passage in the face of a low limestone scarp now surrounded and surmounted by modern houses. The cavern is said to be a quarter of a mile in length, and consists of an intricate series of galleries. Upon a heap of stalagmite have been scratched the names of seventeenth-century trippers, which are now covered by a thin layer of deposit, and the skulls of extinct animals here and there grimly tessellate the roof. The caves were first superficially examined in 1825, but systematic excavations have since been carried out and have resulted in the discovery, in a layer of breccia below two stalagmite floors, of the bones of early extinct animals and a skull of palaeolithic man. The chief finds, accompanied by a diagram of the excavations, are housed in the local museum in Babbacombe Road. In the garden of a private residence near the cavern is Ilsham Grange, which belonged to Torre Abbey. It is a large fourteenth-century building with a detached three-storied tower which contained a chapel and a chamber for a resident monk.

Of the inland excursions, the most popular is the walk to Cockington, a picturesque cluster of thatched cottages gathered round a smithy and embowered in trees, at the entrance of a narrow glen. The church contains a screen and a Jacobean font cover. A pathway from Cockington leads over the hill into an adjoining valley, at the bottom of which is the village of Compton. Compton is noted for its fifteenth-century castle, once the residence of the Gilberts. It is at the north end of the village and is partly in ruins. It must always have been more of a fortified mansion than a fortress, for it lies unstrategically at the bottom of the glen, and, with the exception of the machicolations over its doorway and windows, it appears to possess no defensive works. It consists of two parallel but unequal wings connected by a gabled façade containing the great hall. Its chapel, in the north wing, exhibits a traceried window, and has an adjoining priest's chamber. To the south of the village is Marldon Church, lying against a hill-side. It has a two-storied lich-gate and a vaulted porch. Its rood beam was once supported by a stone screen which stretched between some canopied tombs at the chancel entrance, one of which bears a small effigy supposed to be that of Otho Gilbert, sheriff of the county in 1476.

Paignton is in many respects the antipodes of Torquay. It has much less natural charm, but is credited with a more bracing climate. With the exception of some low cliffs which interrupt the extensive sweep of its sea-front, it stands on a flat shore. It is of that rather ordinary type of watering-place which depends for its attractions on its pier, its promenade, and its sands. But of its kind it is an engaging sample, for it has a parade laid out with spacious lawns and a firm and far-stretching strand preserved from blank monotony by its little cliff-girt harbour. Though unblushingly modern in general appearance Paignton has one or two antique things. Its church is a large Perpendicular building with a Norman door to its

tower. It contains a sculptured stone pulpit and a triple sedilia. The south transeptal chapel is enclosed by an elaborately wrought but mutilated mortuary screen, beneath which are four recumbent figures of the Kirkhams, who erected it. In a recess in the north aisle is a nameless cadaver. The ruins of an episcopal palace adjoin the churchyard on the south. They are in private grounds and consist of a crenellated wall and a corner tower. Miles Coverdale is said to have been the last occupant of the palace. In Kirkham Street, a little to the north-west of the church, is the prettily thatched Kirkham Chantry House.

Brixham, at the southern end of Torbay, has both a character and a reputation of its own, and is a very different place from either Torquay or Paignton. It is Devonshire's great fishing station, and, like Newlyn in Cornwall, it seems to have a special attraction for artists. Its fleet of brown-sailed trawlers, either at anchor in its harbour or afloat in the offing, is one of the sights of the district. Proud though Brixham is of its nautical importance, it is even prouder of the little bit of national history which it helped to make in 1688, when Dutch William landed here to step into a kingdom. No king, except his Norman namesake, made a less dignified entry into his dominions, for, as the tide was low, the Protestant champion was carried ashore by ' a stumpy little man ', who afterwards persisted in riding bareheaded before the prince and his muddied regiment all the way to Newton Abbot. ' My goot people,' exclaimed the foreigner, when the little man had set him on his feet, ' I am come here for all your goots.' Notwithstanding the ambiguity of this address, the Brixham fishermen are said to have responded to it loyally and to have given the claimant to the throne a homely but hearty reception and invited him to ' drink Bohea ' with them, whilst the country-folk flocked into the town and rolled apples down the hill-side to show their goodwill. It was, however, a purely democratic demonstration, for

the clergy and gentry, who were waiting to see which way the cat jumped, were conspicuous by their absence, and the prince had to find his own entertainment in the local tavern whilst his troops foraged in the country-side for supplies. Macaulay says that the dour Dutchman, as soon as he was deposited on the quay in this undignified fashion amongst the gaping crowd, turned to Burnet and said, with a twinkle in his eye: 'Well, doctor, what do you think of predestination now?' To which inquiry the chaplain replied with as much humour as caution that he should never forget the *signal* manner in which Providence had blessed their undertaking. When Providence had fully disclosed its intentions an obelisk was set up to mark the place of the prince's landing, but its site is now occupied by a complacent-looking statue, and the pillar is banished to the end of the pier. Brixham has a higher and lower town, but they have now coalesced into one place. There is a large modern church at Lower Brixham, or Brixham Quay, of which parish Henry Francis Lyle (1793–1847), the author of 'Abide with Me', was the first incumbent. His parishioners, however, did not take kindly to his light and leading, and made his charge a heavy one. There is an old church at Higher Brixham at the top of the hill, and it has to be reached by a steep ascent from the quay. It is a large building with a massive tower and a fan-vaulted porch, on a boss of which is represented the Coronation of the Virgin. In the north transept, which is enclosed by a classical screen, is preserved an ancient altar frontal. Higher Brixham has still something of a semi-rural aspect, but the lower town is built in tiers of commonplace houses round the land-locked harbour, which is protected by a long breakwater. Brixham makes a laboured effort to persuade the visitor that it is a watering-place, but its qualifications in that respect are not very obvious. There is a pebbly beach beyond the breakwater, and a little terraced promenade and bathing-pool have been constructed at Shoalstone on the way to Berry Head. Berry

Head is Brixham's chief marine asset. It is a fine breezy platform dropping precipitously down to the sea, and commands a pretty view of the gleaming semicircle of villa-bespangled shore between it and Torquay. At its extremity is an abandoned fort and a coastguard station, with a modest lighthouse attached to it. On a neighbouring promontory to the south, but separated from it by a cove, in the rocky sides of which are several caves, is another extensive and ruined fort surrounded by a deep fosse. It was constructed during the French wars on the site of a prehistoric cliff castle. Beyond it are the Mudstone sands, where a landslip has recently occurred, and farther on still, below Southdown cliff, are Man Sands. These are not the only beaches which the neighbourhood of Brixham possesses. To the north-west, between it and Paignton, are Elbury Cove and the pretty semicircular expanse of Broad Sands, both in the vicinity of Churston Ferrars. The village of Churston stands by the side of the Paignton road and opposite to the entrance to Lupton, once the residence of the Uptons; but the church stands at the end of a long avenue of elms, in which the village street terminates. It is a fourteenth-century building with a tall gabled porch retaining a stoup and a 'crucifixion' above its doorway. The interior retains beneath its tower arch a beautiful remnant of the rood-screen, of which it has been deprived. Adjoining the church is Churston Court, a pretty old house, once the mansion of the Yardes.

CHAPTER XII

THE DART

A silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings,
Nor have these eyes with greener hills
Been soothed in all my wanderings.

WORDSWORTH

OF all Devonshire's lively and limpid rivers the Dart is the most famous. 'Its flood hath seignory of all floods else.' Its beauty is almost proverbial. Devonshire folk, of course, think much of it, and with good reason. It is not only a purely Devonshire river, but it is so characteristically Devonian. Its course illustrates every feature for which the county is celebrated: its wild moorlands, its deep gorges, its smooth hills and wooded valleys, its quaint old towns and villages, and its beautiful estuaries and seaboard of historic renown. Yet the Dart does not parade its charms. It is an exceedingly shy and elusive river, and seldom reveals itself to the casual traveller. Its early home is amongst the pathless solitudes of Dartmoor; it buries itself deep in woods when it leaves the wilds, and all its later course is fenced by hills. With the exception of one short length of road, no highway follows its valley, and the only railway which intrudes upon its retirement is the little branch line from Totnes to Ashburton. The Dart must be compelled to act as its own showman by taking the traveller with it. The two places where one can best 'see the gleaming river flow' are Totnes and Dartmouth, and those who desire to make easy acquaintance with its beauties must embark on the popular journey upon its waters from one town to the other. It is an enchanting voyage past a constantly-changing panorama of hanging

woods and sloping lawns. The channel contracts and expands, and twists and turns with such frequency that there is always springing upon the spectator some fresh surprise. It is

> A scene of joy and wonder to behold
> That river's shapes and shadows changing ever.

A lady who was once on the Thames in company with Whistler exclaimed rapturously: 'It's just perfect; in fact it's a regular series of Whistlers.' 'Ah, Nature is creeping up, madam,' the painter replied. Nature had certainly managed to creep up to the high-water mark of most artists' inspiration when it fashioned the Dart, and the tourist should endeavour to see it in all its varied phases. At first it comes blithely carolling down a stony defile from the moor, then

> with lessened roar
> It gains a safer bed, and steals, at last
> Along the mazes of a quiet vale,

on its way to Totnes, and finally 'by grassy capes with fuller sound the yellowing river runs', 'to mingle with the bounding main' at Dartmouth. There is not a dull interval on its course, though perhaps it is seen to the least advantage in the immediate neighbourhood of Totnes, where one expects it to appear at its best.

Totnes and Dartmouth are generally bracketed together, for they stand as symbols of what the Dart has to show, and the river is the real highway between them. But this is not the only reason for associating them together. For the tourist they are two of the most interesting towns in the shire and have certain similarities. They are both quaint and picturesque places, and in spite of their popularity and celebrity they have managed to retain something of their ancient simplicity.

The visitor should begin with Totnes first, for it is the more central and accessible. Not only is it threaded on

the main line, but it stands also just at the point where the river comes winding down from the hills to meet the sea water, and can therefore most conveniently introduce the visitor to the beauties both of the river and the estuary. Totnes is an old town, so old, in fact, that its age has led it into the pardonable senile affectation of proclaiming its antiquity to be greater than it actually is. Not only does it claim to be one of the oldest boroughs in the kingdom—it obtained its charter in 1209—but to have been the earliest home of the progenitors of our race. It occupies 'a spit of land between two creeks on the river at the foot of a hill'. Brutus of Troy, it is asserted, concluded his wanderings by sailing up the Dart and landing on this 'ness'.

Here I am and here I rest,
And this place shall be called Totnes,

the weary voyager declared, and the stone on which its founder first planted his foot is jealously preserved by the town in attestation of its claims. There is, of course, as much reason as rhyme in the story. It was Geoffrey of Monmouth's exuberant fancy which fitted Totnes into Nennius's vague picture of the landing of Brutus. Geoffrey had always a fondness for local colour, and his pen was more vivid than veracious. Layamon, on the contrary, assigns the honour to 'Dertimuthe', which he curiously describes as 'in Toteness'. However, Totnes is as picturesque as the legend of its origin and looks almost as venerable. It runs down the hill-side facing the river in an unbroken cataract of old houses, settles, so to speak, in a pool at the bottom, and spills over the bridge to the opposite bank. The little jingling Rabelaisian description of Chinon might stand almost unaltered as a sketch of Totnes:

Little town,
Great renown,
On old stone
Long has stood.
There is the stream if you look down,
If you look up there is the wood.

Its church is half-way up the acclivity, and the remains of its castle stand amongst the trees at the top. The appearance of the town is distinctly medieval, and it abounds in ancient houses with gabled and shingled fronts. Near the church a gateway with an upper chamber and bellcote spans its chief thoroughfare, and set in the pavement a little lower down on the north side of the street is the cherished ' Brutus stone '. The church is a fine sandstone building with a stately tower ornamented with niched statues, and contains a splendid stone screen and stone pulpit. Projecting from the north side of the chancel is a niched staircase which once supported the rood loft. Round three sides of the churchyard is thrown a raised ' rampart ', on the north side of which is the Guildhall, a low structure faced with a colonnade, and a pretty gabled cottage. These buildings occupy a portion of the site of a Benedictine priory founded in the twelfth century by Judhael, in connexion with the abbey of Angiers. In the Middle Ages the town was noted for its cloth, when ' hose of fine Totnes ' was much affected by men of fashion. The town, with its fine ramparted church, its Gothic houses, its gateway, and its castle, recalls Chester, and the visitor will discern a further likeness in the two rows of houses with projecting stories, at the top of the town. Unfortunately the old ' butter walk ', with a similar colonnade, has been destroyed. The castle, which is reached by a side street near the piazza, is not an imposing structure, but its situation is very striking and is reminiscent of that of Launceston Castle, for it is perched on the summit of a declivitous mound overlooking the town on one side and the broad valley of the Dart on the other. The ruins consist of a low circular shell keep crowning the top of the mound, and a walled court. The castle was built by Judhael the Breton upon whom the lordship of Totnes was conferred by the Conqueror, and it shows no signs of any subsequent alteration or extension. On the Plains at the foot of the town is an obelisk with a medallion commemorating William

John Wills, a native of Totnes, who was 'the first with Burke to cross the Australian continent, and perished in returning in 1861'. An island which the river encloses below the bridge has been turned into a pleasure garden.

The visitor will naturally be eager to commence his exploration of the neighbourhood by paying a visit to Dartmouth. If, however, he expects when walking there to have the company of the river with him on his journey, he will be disappointed, for he will see but little of it until he arrives at his destination; but there are other things to interest him on the way. The main road will take him far inland, for it will lead him half-way to Kingsbridge before it finds a convenient opportunity of breaking through the hills which surround the river. Harberton, which lies in a hollow to the west of the road, a few miles out of the town, is worth going out of the way to see, for it possesses a fine church with one of the handsomest screens in Devon and a richly sculptured stone pulpit. Near the church is an old church house with a huge door. Halwell, where the traveller takes leave of the Kingsbridge road, is prettily situated, but neither its church nor that of its neighbour Morleigh has any noteworthy features. The Dartmouth road beyond Halwell cuts through an encampment, and a mile to the south, behind a house, by the side of the Kingsbridge road as it mounts over a hill, is Stanborough 'Castle', an oval entrenchment with a single vallum, now much levelled. To the south of the Dartmouth road, on a hill-side overlooking the Garrah brook, which flows into Slapton Ley, is Blackawton, whose church has a gaudily-coloured screen, parcloses, a triple sedilia and double piscina, and a Jacobean pulpit. On the floor of its north aisle is a brass of Nicholas Forde (1582).

The view of Dartmouth Harbour from the Totnes road is not its best. It appears to greater effect when it comes suddenly 'looming into vision' from the hill above Kingswear on the opposite shore. From this vantage-ground the river looks like a sleeping lake, and

all the valley seems
Strewn with a softer light, the atmosphere of dreams.

The town itself, however, is not quite so fascinating as its setting. It is a congeries of narrow streets and courts bordering its quay. Like Totnes, it is old-fashioned to the verge of quaintness, but it has not got quite the same air of medieval informality or the same look of 'tanned antiquity' that makes its neighbour so intriguing. It is congested without being captivating, though, like Totnes, it has a charming piazza of gabled houses—the Butter Walk—and a picturesque and antique corner dwelling near the quay. The church peers over a block of houses behind the Butter Walk. It has a fine screen, a lofty carved stone pulpit, a large west gallery and a fine old door. A curious feature of the building is the odd way in which the arcade was altered in the fifteenth century. On the floor of the chancel is the brass of its builder and his wives, John Hawley (1408), a local merchant, who, according to Stowe, 'in 1390 waged the navie of shippes of the ports at his own charges, and took 34 shippes laden with wyne to the summe of fifteen hundred tunnes'. Well might it be said of him:

Blow the wind high, or blow it low,
It bloweth fair to Hawley's hoe.

There are also the brasses of a lady in a horned head-dress, and of Gilbert Staplehill, Mayor (1600). The door in the south porch, dated 1631, exhibits some good ironwork. On the south wall is a picture of 'the raising of the widow's son', painted by William Brockedon (1787–1854), a Totnes artist of distinction. The parish church is, however, at Townstall, on the summit of the hill to the north. It is a fourteenth-century edifice with a good tower containing some pre-Reformation bells. In the south transept is an effigy of Simon Rede, the last abbot of Torre (1310–50), robed in an alb. The hill commands a fine view of the town squeezing itself into a narrow defile below.

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MOUTH OF THE DART

SHARPHAM WOODS

Dartmouth has a long maritime history beginning with the murder of Earl Beorn, who was killed here by Harold's brother Sweyn on one of his roving expeditions. William I is said to have embarked at the port on his fatal expedition for the relief of Mans. It was the port of departure of Richard I's squadron for the third Crusade ; its ships took part in the French wars of the fourteenth century and in return the town was plundered by the French. It is some testimony to Dartmouth's early naval reputation that Chaucer says of his shipman : ' For aught I wot he was of Dartemuthe '. In the civil war of the seventeenth century the town was captured by Prince Maurice but subsequently recovered by Fairfax. Thomas Newcomen, the inventor of the condensing steam engine, was born at Dartmouth in 1663.

Dartmouth is out of sight from the mouth of its river and is therefore well screened from attack by sea, but to render it more inviolable its castle was placed at the entrance to the estuary. It is a small sixteenth-century building overhanging the water, rectangular in plan, with a small bay and a projecting turret. It was captured by Fairfax in 1646. A chain was formerly drawn across the river from it to a small fort on the opposite shore, and in a showcase within are preserved one of the links of the cable and some cannon balls used during the siege. Adjoining the castle is the church of St. Petrock, a plain Perpendicular building with a bald interior which contains some seventeenth-century floor brasses. A flight of steps near the modern battery leads to the bathing strand of Sugary Cove and to Compass Point.

Kingswear, immediately opposite Dartmouth, with which it is connected by a ferry, is a still more congested place, for it is wedged in between a steep hill-side and the estuary. It is not of much interest in itself but is important as a stepping-stone to Dartmouth. A road below the church leads to a pretty little cove at Millbay. Kingswear Castle stands on a sea-girt promontory near the entrance to

the cove. It is a small square building with an outstanding cylindrical tower, but is now in private grounds. On the top of the hill above Kingswear Castle is a tall tower erected for a mariner's landmark.

The main road through Harbertonford and Halwell is not the only way of reaching Dartmouth from Totnes. There is a more direct but much rougher road running over the hills between the main road and the river. A lane, at the corner of which is a Latin cross, leads from the Plains up a steep hill-side and drops down into the valley of the Harbourn. Clinging to the slope of the hill above the Harbourn valley is the village of Ashprington. It has a church with a slender tower somewhat disfigured by its ugly projecting staircase. There is a small inscribed brass to William Somaster (1529) on the south external wall of the chancel. A fragment of the original rood screen is hung in the church porch. On the hill overlooking the Dart and surrounded by noble woods is the modern mansion of Sharpham. In its park is a wych elm, sixteen feet in girth, and a heronry, the birds from which can be seen in great numbers standing on the mud-banks of the river at low tide. The Harbourn runs through a narrow grassy vale, and below the village at Bow is crossed by a bridge. Near the side of the road up the valley is Painsford farm, an ancient but despoiled manor-house once belonging to the Courtenays. To the east of Bow bridge the river flows into a creek running up from the Dart, by the side of which is the hamlet of Tuckenhay. From Tuckenhay a steep and rough road crosses a tributary brook and clambers over a hill to Cornworthy, which struggles up the slope of an adjacent glen. The church at the top of the village has a screen, some parcloses, and an eighteenth-century pulpit, the huge sounding board of which is suspended uselessly from the neighbouring arcade. On the south of the sanctuary is a large monument with the effigies of Sir Thomas Harris and his wife (1610). On the west side of the village

Once a convent, old and brown,
Looked, but ah! it looks no more,
From the neighbouring hill-side down.

It was a priory of Augustinian nuns founded in the fourteenth century. Only the ruins of its vaulted gateway are now standing by the side of a lane running over the hill. From Cornworthy the traveller, instead of going on to Dartmouth, should proceed to Dittisham (Ditsham), for Dittisham is one of the few water-side villages to be found along the estuary of the Dart, and at Dittisham there is a ferry which will put the visitor in touch with the others. Dittisham stretches itself over the neck of a promontory jutting out into the river. It is noted for its plum orchards and salmon fishery, and commands a charming view of the river and the Galmpton creek. Dittisham church has a tall tower which shows up well from the opposite shore. Inside the church is a screen, a gaily-coloured pulpit, and a two-light window looking from the chamber above the porch into the church. The village trips prettily down to the landing-stage from which the traveller can cross to Greenway. Amongst the woods which clothe the farther shore is Greenway House, the birthplace in 1539 of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. In the river is the Anchor rock on which the shoresmen were accustomed to maroon their wives when they wished to cool their tempers, and to which Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have resorted to smoke his pipe in peace. By making a long detour the traveller can reach Stoke Gabriel, passing on his journey Sandridge, the birthplace of another distinguished Elizabethan navigator, John Davis, who gave his name to Davis Straits and was killed by Japanese pirates off the coast of Sumatra in 1622. Stoke Gabriel stands above another creek and makes a pretty picture from the river. Its church has had the central portion of its screen sawn off above the panels, but the side screens are intact. A laborious journey across the intervening hills will bring the traveller to Berry Pomeroy, which lies on the further side of the Totnes and Paignton

road. Berry Pomeroy had for its vicar, from 1681 till 1723, John Prince, the Devon biographer. A slate tablet to his memory is fixed to the north wall of the church. The church possesses a lengthy screen, two parclose screens and a groined porch with a stoup. But the chief interest of Berry Pomeroy is its ruined castle—by far the finest in Devon. It stands on the brink of a wooded hill a mile and a half to the north of the village. The castle belonged originally to the Pomeroys, the possessors of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall. Its situation is as remarkable for its picturesqueness as for its apparent security. The castle is approached through a noble wood which covers the hill-side and descends precipitously into a deep glen wherein glimmers a brook. The stronghold is perched on a jutting spur above this ravine and is now completely enveloped in foliage. There is a legend that one of these bold Pomeroy barons, when the castle was hopelessly besieged, blew a last blast of defiance with his bugle horn from the topmost tower, then clad in full panoply mounted his charger, and dashed headlong over the precipice to destruction. The ruins are very congested and consist of a thirteenth-century gateway flanked by hexagonal towers and connected by a curtain wall with an outstanding drum tower. The chamber above the gateway is said to have been the chapel. Over the curtain wall peer the sightless eyes of a large and intrusive sixteenth-century mansion which seems to have formed two parallel blocks enclosing an inner court-yard. On the other side of the original court are the remains of a square tower and the crumbling remnants of some adjoining apartments. The last of the Pomeroys was attainted for his connexion with the rising of 1549, and his possessions passed into the avaricious hands of Protector Somerset, who built the mansion within the castle. The visitor

> Can underneath the wide o'erarching gate
> Survey the dwelling of this chief of power,
> When all around proclaimed his high estate
> Amidst no common pomp the despot sate.

Somerset is said to have spent £20,000 over the construction of his residence, but he never finished it. Prince gives a flamboyant description of its magnificence, and says that so numerous were its windows that it was a long day's work to close the casements. Sir Edward Seymour entertained the Prince of Orange here in 1688. When the prince casually remarked, 'I understand that you belong to the Duke of Somerset's family?' his host haughtily replied: 'Pardon me, sir, but the Duke of Somerset belongs to my family', which was literally true, for Sir Edward represented the elder branch of the Seymours, to whom the title did not descend. As Prince laments: 'All this glory lyeth in the dust; there being nothing standing but a few broken walls which seem to mourn their own approaching funerals'; and it was 'a less drear ruin then than now'.

To view the higher reaches of the Dart, the visitor will have to go to Ashburton, and he may as well travel thither by rail or on foot, for he will see more of the river. The railway clings closely to the river all the way to Buckfastleigh but the road only keeps company with it for the last mile or two of the journey. Before proceeding to Ashburton, however, the traveller can make a little excursion in the neighbourhood of Totnes which will both bring him on to the Ashburton road and will afford him a passing glimpse of the river. This is a ramble to Staverton through Little Hempston. Little Hempston is a small village above a brook by the side of the railway line to Newton Abbot. It has a pleasing fifteenth-century church with a good screen, some ancient glass, and some effigies of mailed knights and a lady. Between the Staverton road, which mounts over a hill, and the Dart is a small fourteenth-century manor-house built round a tiny court and containing a hall. Staverton is a larger village than its neighbour, but, like it, lies in a hollow. Its church also has a screen, to which the rood loft has been restored, and a seventeenth-century pulpit and reading pew. On the

south external wall of the church is a small brass of John Rowe (1592). One of Rowe's descendants became a Roman Catholic when Papistry was fashionable in the reign of James II, and was so chagrined at having changed his religion in vain when the Stuart king lost his throne that he took to his bed and died. Nicholas Rowe, the poet-laureate of 1715, sprang from the same family. But the chief glory of Staverton is its fine fifteenth-century bridge of seven arches across a charming stretch of the Dart, from which 'the eye can find far scope to muse on vistas opened by the wandering stream'. By crossing the river the traveller can make his way to Dartington on the outskirts of Totnes. The river throws a large loop round the parish, but the Ashburton road, which the wayfarer will join, cuts across the chord of the arc and makes direct for the town. The church, near the road, is a pleasing modern structure designed by J. L. Pearson. It contains the screen and font of the old church which occupied another site near Dartington Hall on the banks of the river, and the tower of which is still standing. The Hall, the ancient seat of the Champernownes, is a stately combination of Elizabethan and fourteenth-century architecture, standing amongst the woods which border the river. The original home of the Martyns, of which a few arches remain, was enlarged by John Holland, Duke of Exeter, in 1386, and the roofless hall of the Duke's mansion still stands at the north-east corner of the present quadrangle with its gateway behind it. Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–36), the Tractarian, and James Anthony Froude (1818–94), the historian, were born at Dartington rectory, and were the sons of the Archdeacon of Totnes, a stern stoical man who once amazed his clergy by delivering a charge in unemotional tones when his dearly-loved daughter was lying dead at home. 'Richard Hurrell Froude,' said Thomas Mozley, 'was a man of whom it is difficult for those who knew him, to speak without exceeding the bounds of common admiration and affection.' Mozley speaks of James Anthony on

the contrary as 'a young man of solitary habits and amusements, who had been chilled and crushed in childhood' and who in consequence 'felt an antagonism to authority'.

Though Ashburton is on the Yeo, it is sufficiently near the Dart to make a good base for the exploration of the region of the upper Dart. Ashburton is an old-fashioned town pleasantly seated amongst some well-timbered hills on the outskirts of Dartmoor. It was one of the ancient stannary towns and, like Totnes, was noted for its manufacture of cloth. It was captured by Fairfax in 1646. It was the birthplace of two distinguished but not very amiable men. John Dunning, the first Lord Ashburton, was born here in 1731, and the sour William Gifford, the first editor of *The Quarterly*, in 1756. Dunning was the son of a local attorney and owed his advancement in life to his own pushfulness and capacity and not at all to his personal appearance or charm. He was a stunted and misshapen man whom Thurlow described as 'like the knave of clubs'. His manners in court, Hannah More declared, 'were insufferably bad, for he coughed and spat with every word he uttered'. In 1768 he became Solicitor-General and purchased the neighbouring manors of Spitchwick and Widecombe, to which possessions he lost no opportunity of referring. To illustrate a point in a trial in which he was engaged he remarked to the judge: 'My Lord, I have two little manors.' 'I am aware of it, Sir John,' the judge curtly remarked. Ashburton's most interesting feature is its parish church which has an imposing tower and a fine pair of entrance gates. The interior is dignified, but suffers from the loss of its original screen which has been replaced by a poor modern substitute. Some rich tabernacle work which adorned one of its chapels was removed by its donor, John Prowse, who, to prevent its destruction, used it to embellish his house. The old chapel of St. Laurence, founded as a chantry by Bishop Stapeldon in 1314, stands in a lane to the north-east of the church and has been

converted into a Grammar School. Its tower still stands and carries a spirelet.

The most popular excursion in the neighbourhood of Ashburton used to be the ramble through the Buckland woods and Holne Chase, which introduced the traveller to one of the finest bits of scenery on the upper reaches of the river. The Dart, after its descent from the moor, rushes through a deep and thickly wooded defile where it suddenly doubles back upon itself round a sharp elbow and then passes within a couple of miles of the town. The Tavistock road runs along the base of this triangle and has in consequence to cross the river twice. The ramble was through this sylvan gorge up one side and down the other. The track up the left bank, the Buckland Drive, passes beneath two projecting crags, the Raven and Auswell rocks, springing from a lofty tor draped in woods, and emerges from the woods near New Bridge, the more distant of the two bridges by which the river is spanned By crossing this bridge the traveller could re-enter the woods of Holne Chase, and return to Ashburton by crossing the river by Holne Bridge. The Buckland Drive is now closed to the public, but the pedestrian can still obtain access to Holne Chase on certain specified days. The most romantic scene in the valley is, however, Holne Bridge itself. The river comes gliding and glancing down a deep boulder-strewn bed beneath a wooded amphitheatre, ' dancing on the polished stones, like childhood laughing as it goes '. The walk through the Chase,

> Whose tangled alleys far invade
> The depth of the brown forest's shade,

is a rather futile chase as far as the river is concerned, for it hides itself almost completely amongst the trees at the bottom of the glen. At the point of the elbow, however, the traveller passes over the top of a precipitous cliff known as the ' Lover's Leap ', and the river comes into fuller view below. When the traveller at length ' emerges from the

forest's solemn canopies ' he can cross the river at New Bridge, where he will find himself on the fringe of the moor. By mounting the hill up which the Tavistock road climbs and then taking a rough track to the left near the hamlet of Poundsgate, called Dr. Blackall's Drive, he will come again upon the river buried deep in a wooded gorge. The ' drive ' rejoins the Tavistock road between Bell Tor and Sharptor, nearly opposite Paignton's moorland reservoir on the farther side of the river. The traveller can then descend by the highway to Dartmeet, one of the most famous beauty spots in the moor where the East Dart,

> Fresh from the mountain's summit dark and high
> Where storms go hurrying by
> From 'mid the strong foundations of the earth
> Where the torrents have their birth,

comes bickering down a broad open valley to unite with its sister stream, the West Dart. It is a delightful scene of lively but subdued beauty, spoilt, however, in the summer by its popularity, for the valley is choked with parked cars. Just above the modern bridge is a picturesque but imperfect clapper bridge. The ' meek streamlet ', whose prattle amuses the holiday-maker, has unhappily a very sinister reputation amongst those who know it.

> O river of Dart, O river of Dart,
> Every year thou claimest a heart.

The ' cry ' of the river in stormy days gives doleful warning to the moormen that a ' freshet ' is descending the valley, and it comes with such velocity and impetuosity that horses and carts have been known to be swept from the clapper bridges. By the side of the road as it descends towards Dartmeet is a slab of granite known as the ' Coffin Stone ', from the fact that it was customary for funeral parties when crossing the moor to deposit their burden upon it. There is a cleft in the slab said to have been

caused in dramatic fashion by a flash of lightning when the corpse of a man of ill-repute was resting on the stone. On his return journey the traveller by going along the side of the Dart, instead of crossing the river when he reaches New Bridge, and then climbing a track up the hill-side where the Dart is joined by its tributary the Webburn, can reach Buckland-in-the-Moor, a little group of clustered dwellings prettily situated at the foot of its Beacon, a rounded hill crowned by a mass of granite which forms a conspicuous feature in a New Bridge landscape. Buckland church is a modest edifice with a good screen and a rudely sculptured Norman font. The view from above the village into the valley of the Dart is striking.

There is another ramble from Ashburton which, though it entails the visitor's retracing his steps to Holne Bridge, will take him into another portion of the Dart valley. This is the walk to Holne. Holne stands on a hill on the right bank of the river opposite the wooded gorge on which the traveller looked from Dr. Blackall's drive. From Holne he gazes up the valley instead of across it, and with Sharptor at its head a very charming view is presented. The vicarage was the birthplace in 1819 of Charles Kingsley, whose father was vicar. Kingsley's childhood, however, was spent at Barnack, in the Fen country, and at Clovelly. Holne church is somewhat roughly built and contains a clumsily doctored screen and a carved pulpit. Adjoining it is the old church house, now turned into an inn, with a hospitable-looking gabled porch. From Holne a road skirting the hamlet of Scorriton, where there is a cross built into a wall, passes below Hembury 'Castle'—a wooded hill overhanging the Dart and encircled by a double series of entrenchments—and descends into the village of Buckfast. Buckfast stands on the banks of the Dart, and once had a Benedictine abbey dating from Saxon days, but refounded in 1137 by Ethelward de Pomeroy as a house of Cistercians. Its wealth was considerable, but at the Dissolution when

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HOLNE PULPIT AND SCREEN

Ruthless Tudor's bloated form
Rode on the blast and led the storm
And raised the sacrilegious cry,
' Down with the nests, the rooks will fly,'

it was all dissipated, and the buildings fell into such decay that Risdon described them as ' a subject for wonder and pity '. In 1882 a community of French Benedictines purchased the site and have rebuilt the abbey on its old foundations. It is an imposing building, the effect of which, however, is spoilt by the tall chimneys of some neighbouring cloth factories. In spite of its moorland surroundings, Buckfast Abbey scarcely presents a typical picture of monastic seclusion, for it is set in the midst of an industrial village, and in the summer it is besieged with hundreds of trippers drawn hither probably more by curiosity to behold something ' wondrous and strange ' than by devotion ; yet, *mutatis mutandis*, the scene bears a resemblance to the ancient pilgrimages to popular shrines, when, as the stricter members of the community complained, ' diverse men and women will go thus after their own willes synging wonton songs and will have with them bagge-pipes, so that every towne they come throwe, what with the noyse of their singing and the sound of their pipying and the jingling of their bells and with barking out of dogges after them, they make more noise than if the kinge came there with all his minstrelles '. The domestic buildings incorporate a fifteenth-century tower, and on the north side of the new minster is a stone coffin. A track known as the Abbots' Way once ran from the abbey over the moor in the direction of Tavistock and can still be traced at intervals over the moors. The cloth factories of the neighbourhood no doubt perpetuate the traditions of the medieval abbey when the monastic flocks roamed on the moor and were driven down to Buckfast for shearing, for the Cistercians, as the producers of the raw material, had the wool trade of the county largely in their own hands. About a mile from Buckfast where a bridge crosses the

Dart is Buckfastleigh, a little crooked town of narrow streets on the Mardle brook, and like the neighbouring village, devoted to the manufacture of cloth. Its one curiosity is its church, mounted on the top of a much quarried ridge above the Dart at the entrance to the town. It is reached by a flight of a hundred and ninety-five steps and has a battlemented tower carrying a spire. It is a plastered building with an interior so stripped of its ornamentation that even the shafts of its sedilia and double piscena have been wrenched away. It preserves, however, a rather curious font. At the east end of the churchyard, which looks down upon Buckfast Abbey and the valley of the Dart, are the crumbling remains of a chapel, and near the south porch is a curious shelter covering the tomb of Richard Cabell of Brooke (1677), a man of such evil repute that the enclosure of his tomb is said to have been due to the popular fear that his spirit might haunt the neighbourhood. A couple of miles to the south of Buckfastleigh is Dean Prior, of which Robert Herrick, the cavalier poet-parson, became vicar in 1629. He was not happy in his rural retreat and hated Dean and its people.

> Search worlds of ice, and rather there
> Dwell than in loathed Devonshire.

In 1647 he was ejected from his living on account of his political partisanship and betook himself to London. Though he had declared that with a ' people currish, churlish as the seas and rude almost as rudest savages ' he would only ' resojourn when rocks turn to rivers, rivers turn to men ', yet when the political tide turned at the Restoration he was reinstated at Dean and died here in 1674. The church stands by the road-side and contains a monument of Sir Edward Giles (1642). Hard by is the parsonage where the rubicund and double-chinned vicar lived in single blessedness with his servant ' Prue ' and a pet pig which he taught to drink out of his tankard.

Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen small :
A little buttery and therein
A little bin.

Faithful Prue rests like her master in the churchyard.

In this little urn is laid
Prudence Baldwin, once my maid,
From whose happy spark, here let
Spring the purple violet.

There is a more interesting church at Rattery, another couple of miles over the hill to the south-east. The village lies in a hollow near a brook, but the church stands on the top of a knoll above it. Its tower carries a spire, and the interior contains a good screen.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOUTH HAMS

> Still led by hope o'er many a cliff sublime
> They found a warmer world, a milder clime.
>
> CAMPBELL

THE South Hams is generally somewhat vaguely defined as the district south of Dartmoor. Its eastern and western limits are regarded respectively as the Teign and the Tamar. But the South Hams in popular parlance always means the peninsula between the Dart and the Plym, reputed to be the warmest region in Devon. It is a billowy and fertile land, not strikingly beautiful in itself, but endowed with great charm on its coast and in the neighbourhood of the many streams which furrow its surface on their way from the moor to the sea.

> There wild woods grow and rivers row
> And mony a hill between.

It was once famous for its cider orchards, but the orchards are now somewhat neglected. Even less in evidence than its cider is the beverage known as ' white wine ', for which the district was once celebrated. It has now ceased to be manufactured. It was a heady but highly palatable tipple concocted, it is said, of ' grout ', hops, and white of egg, but the process of its manufacture was always something of a secret and the art has now been lost. The mystery lay chiefly in the composition of ' grout '.

The peninsula is bisected by the river Avon, and its most convenient centre of exploration is Kingsbridge which is reached by a branch line running down from South Brent on the main line. There is, however, a strip of coast

skirting Start Bay which is more conveniently visited from Dartmouth. Stoke Fleming, the nearest village, stands high, and is rendered all the more conspicuous by the lofty tower of its church. The interior of the church, as at Dartmouth, was re-fashioned rather awkwardly in the fifteenth century. On the floor of the nave is the fine brass of John Corp (1351), with a Norman-French and Latin inscription, and beneath the tower is the effigy of a lady. From Stoke Fleming, the road descends to the charmingly situated Blackpool sands, which are spread in front of a sylvan amphitheatre whose seclusion is as yet unspoilt by the speculative builder. From this recess the road climbs to the village of Strete, only to run down another steep incline to that singular shore known as the Slapton Sands, where

> On one side lies the ocean and on one
> Lies a great water.

The sands stretch uninterruptedly from the cliffs below Strete to Torcross ; they are, however, really not sands at all, but an expanse of fine yellow gravel which has blocked the mouths of the neighbouring streams and has forced the waters of these obstructed brooks to form a long lagoon known as Slapton Ley. The Ley is backed by a bank of wooded hills broken in the centre by a pretty valley up which the Ley recedes. On the top of Darnacombe Hill, overlooking the combe, and cut by the road from Stokenham, is a camp with a single rampart. Slapton village lies behind a hill on the north of its Ley, and is reached by a road over a causeway. It is gathered somewhat confusedly round its spacious churchyard. The church has a west tower carrying a broach spire, and contains a screen. To the north of the church is the picturesque ivy-clad tower of a college founded in the reign of Edward III by Sir Guy de Bryan, who was the king's standard-bearer and one of the first Knights of the Garter. Poole, once the home of Sir John Hawkins, is half a mile

to the north, sunk in a hollow by the road-side. It is now a farm and externally displays little of its antiquity except in the arrangement of its outbuildings. 'When Lady Hawkins condescended to go to church, two pages walked before her unrolling a red velvet carpet the whole way, so that she might not wet her feet.' Sir John, who was bred to the sea, was, on the contrary, anything but a carpet knight. He was 'greedy, unscrupulous and rude', but was not above using pious platitudes when it suited him. In giving an account to his sovereign of his failure to intercept the Spanish treasure fleet in 1590, he murmured: 'Paul doth plant, Apollo doth water, but God giveth the increase.' 'God's death,' exclaimed the Queen in a rage, 'the man went out a sailor and has come home a preacher. I looked for money, not a sermon.'

The road to Torcross runs, as straight as a pencil, along the top of this tract of sand between the mere and the sea, and on this 'glimmering land' one seems to pace for ever. Torcross is a small collection of houses gathered round the southern end of the Ley. Here the cliffs close in again, but at Bee Sands and Hall Sands they are indented with sandy coves round which a few cottages have collected. A cliff path skirts the shore all the way to Start Point. Start Point is a fitting finial to this rather extraordinary shore, for it has a touch of eccentricity about it. It is a bulky promontory terminating in a low and saw-like ridge of rock at the end of which is a lighthouse. Start Point, however, is not the southern extremity of Devon. The traveller who is curious to know how the shire ends must make his way to Prawle Point. A rough cliff path connects the two headlands, and those who shrink from cliff walks can reach Prawle by descending into a picturesque valley and join the highway near Chivelstone. Chivelstone Church lies a little to the west of the road at the head of a valley leading to East Portlemouth. It has an interesting but badly mutilated screen and a carved pulpit, said to be hewn out of a single tree-trunk. Prawle village is on the

cliff above the headland. The headland is even less imposing than Start, but it ends in a pretty conical rock on which is perched a coastguard station.

Though the visitor who has traversed the road from Totnes to Dartmouth will have already seen something of the interior of the South Hams, he will not have seen its most prepossessing features. He will see a more typical bit of it in the course of his journey from South Brent to Kingsbridge. South Brent is a large village on the Avon, lying at the foot of Brent Hill, a peaked and isolated eminence, on which are the traces of an ancient chapel. It possesses a large but rather obscurely placed church with a low Norman tower and some massive arches stilted at the crossing. The Avon valley gives access to the moor as well as to the sea. A road ascends it to Shipley Bridge, in the vicinity of which are several hut circles, and on Coryndon Ball a low hill between the Avon river and its tributary the Glaze Brook, are some more hut circles, a ruined kistvaen, and a stone avenue. The Glaze brook flows into the Avon, near Avon Wick, and on a hill above the junction is an encampment. The traveller on his way from South Brent to Kingsbridge will join the Avon at Avon Wick, which is prettily situated by the river-side. Conspicuously placed on the top of a knoll below Avon Wick, and looking down on the river, is Diptford. Its church has a spire with a twist in it, and retains a remnant of its screen and a brass to Honor Vowel (1595). Crabadon Court, the fifteenth-century manor-house of the Vowels, still stands to the south-east. To the west of Diptford is North Huish Church overlooking an adjoining vale. It also has a spire and retains some good screenwork and an altar slab. Beyond North Huish is Ugborough, and standing well to the south-east of it is Fowelscombe, a prettily situated sixteenth-century mansion. Ugborough is on a slope above the road from Totnes to Ermington. The village is attractive and has an imposing church with a good tower and a chambered porch. The central screen

has been sawn off at its base, but the aisle screens and their parcloses remain in their entirety. In the south transept is a fourteenth-century brass found in the church in 1862. To the north of Ugborough, Dartmoor is buttressed by two fine beacons, which form a striking feature in the landscape. From Ugborough a fairly direct road runs to Kingsbridge. Near Gara Bridge is Blackdown Camp, which commands a view of practically the whole of the South Hams and is itself worth examination. The camp consists of three embankments, which, instead of being concentric, coalesce on the north. The Kingsbridge road proceeds through Loddiswell, an uninteresting village standing high above the Avon valley. Woodleigh Church, on the opposite side of the valley, contains a good Easter sepulchre, exhibiting a representation of the Resurrection. Three miles to the east of Woodleigh is East Allington Church, which has a good screen (dated 1547), and in its south chapel the brasses of John and Honora Fortescue (1595). Below Loddiswell the Avon, which ought to fall, and perhaps at one time did fall, into the Salcombe estuary, turns abruptly to the west. The road crosses the river, and, taking leave of it, proceeds to Kingsbridge. Near a wooded combe opening from the river valley due south of Loddiswell, and reached by a lane from the Kingsbridge road, are the remains of Leigh Priory, a cell of Buckfast Abbey. Its site is now occupied by a farm, but at the entrance to the farm is an imposing gatehouse flanked by some lofty walls, and behind the farm, and now turned into a barn, are the refectory and dormitories, with store cellars beneath, and a flight of steps covered by a wooden shelter.

Kingsbridge, both by its position and importance, is the capital of the South Hams. It is a pleasant old-fashioned town with its main street running down a hill-side to a quay at the head of the Salcombe estuary. Kingsbridge has no bridge, and it never belonged to the Crown, for the manor was held by the abbey of Buckfast; but it is a

place of some antiquity. The church, which stands behind a quaint market arcade, is a cruciform building with a central tower carrying a spire. Some panels of its rood-screen have been worked up into its pulpit and reading-desk, but the parcloses are intact. In its south transept is a fine marble mural monument by Flaxman. Kingsbridge was the birthplace in 1705 of William Cookworthy, the discoverer of China Clay, and in 1738 of John Wolcot, 'Peter Pindar', the satirist. Cookworthy was a Quaker preacher, and after his discovery of 'kaolin' set up as a porcelain manufacturer at Plymouth in 1786. He was apparently prouder of his material than of the shape which it was given, for on one occasion he spoilt a valuable set of china by snapping a cup in twain to exhibit its texture. Wolcot was both a doctor and a clergyman, but in 1778 migrated to London and devoted himself to literature. A house at the lower end of the street is said to have been a residence of the abbots of Buckfast, and at Welle House in Wallingford Street is an ancient archway beneath a gable. At the east extremity of Duncombe Street is Dodbrook Church, containing some good screenwork and a thirteenth-century font. One of the piers of the arcade has been curiously turned out of doors and converted into a war memorial.

The most popular excursion in the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge is of course to 'Sunny Salcombe', reputed to be the cosiest place in Devon. The road runs over some high ground stretching between the villages of West Alvington and Malborough (Marber). At West Alvington there is a side screen and a Renaissance tomb. Malborough Church has a groined porch and a west tower carrying a spire which is a conspicuous landmark for miles round. A little to the north of the village are some traces of earthworks, and lying below the Salcombe road is Ilton Castle, a modern farm occupying the site of a fortress of the Courtenays, which has now disappeared. Salcombe occupies a charming situation on the western shore of its estuary. The older

part of the town is a collection of narrow lanes bordering its quay and has a modern church bearing its date, 1843, conspicuously carved upon its tower. The hill-side overlooking the harbour is dotted with modern residences. By the harbour-side are the remnants of a castle built, like Dartmouth and Kingswear, in the reign of Henry VIII, and gallantly defended in 1646 by Sir John Fortescue. Beyond the castle is a stretch of sand, and near it, snugly ensconced in trees, is the Moult, once occupied by James Anthony Froude, the historian (1818–94). His *History* is remarkable for its literary excellence, but was fiercely attacked by Freeman for its mistakes and partisanship. A lane behind the Moult leads up to Bolt Head, a savage but majestic headland surrounded by rock-crowned cliffs, from the neighbourhood of which a most charming view of Salcombe and its estuary can be obtained. A voyage up the estuary to Kingsbridge is only comparable to a sail up the Dart, though the scenery is not quite as alluring. On the hill-side opposite Salcombe is East Portlemouth, which can be reached by a ferry. Its church, on the top of the hill, has a fine but badly mutilated screen. Above the town the Salcombe estuary widens and ramifies into a number of broad and lengthy creeks. A road from Portlemouth skirts an arm of one of these, and clambering over a hill descends into South Pool, situated at the head of another arm. It is a retired little place with a church on a hill-side above a dribbling brook. The church has an Easter sepulchre, like the one at Woodleigh, but on it has been laid the effigy of a clergyman robed in a surplice. In the south transept is the effigy of a lady, and in the south aisle is a mural monument of Leonard Dare, who died ' in the memorable year 1588 '.

The western side of the Salcombe peninsula exhibits some of the finest coast scenery in South Devon. A road leads from Kingsbridge through West Alvington to Thurlestone, overlooking Bigbury Bay. Thurlestone, once a simple village beneath the shade of a row of lime trees, has now

become a watering-place with two large hotels and an extensive golf course. Its church, on the side of a hill, has a solid-looking and almost windowless tower, and a priest's door curiously inserted in a divided buttress. In the south aisle is a mural monument to Thomas Stevens (1658). The Thurle Stone, from which the village derives its name, is an isolated rock on the shore pierced by an archway. From Thurlestone there is a track along the cliffs to Hope Cove, where a breakwater forms a little harbour. The contiguous hamlets of Outer and Inner Hope are grouped round the cove. The former joins hands up a dingle with the village of Galmpton, whilst the latter has a picturesque group of thatched cottages at the mouth of another combe. One of the ships of the Armada is said to have been wrecked in the cove. Another disaster occurred in Ramillies Cove beneath Bolt Tail, when the *Ramillies* frigate was wrecked in 1760 with the loss of over 700 men. Bolt Tail is a bold, imposing headland closing Bigbury Bay on the east. On it are some remains of a cliff castle. There is a long cliff walk ver Bolbury Down to Bolt Head. The Down, which rises to over 400 feet, is riven in places with fissures and fringed by some appalling precipices, below which, in confused heaps, lie masses of fallen rock. Midway between the two headlands the cliffs are indented with a secluded beach, Soar Cove, where there is a cavern, Bull's Hole, which is said to have another opening near Bolt Head. The popular story goes that ' a bull once entered one end and emerged a week later at the other with its hair changed from black to white '. At South Huish, which lies at the bottom of a dell to the north-east of Galmpton, is a roofless church with a shattered tower and South Milton Church, standing in the side of an adjoining combe, has a screen with painted panels and a Norman font.

Another shorter ramble, and not so rich in scenic interest, may be taken along the pleasant road to Torcross, which clings for a while to the shore of the estuary and crosses one of its many creeks by a five-arched bridge. Near Charleton

(Char-leton), where there is a modern church attached to an ancient tower, it leaves the estuary and, passing Frogmore at the head of another creek, proceeds to the prettily situated village of Stokenham. Standing above the road-side is a fine church with a lofty tower and possessed of a gaily coloured screen and a parclose. From Stokenham a lane leads back to Kingsbridge, through Sherford, whose church also contains a screen and parclose, but the rood loft, to accommodate which the arcade has been purposely lifted, has been destroyed. The north door, which is approached through a very small lich-gate, is, like the door at Thurlestone Church, set in the buttress.

The visitor can make a further exploration of the shore of Bigbury Bay by proceeding along the Modbury road through Churchstow, the mother-parish of Kingsbridge, the tower of whose church forms a conspicuous landmark. Aveton Gifford (Auton Jiffard), the next village, lies at the bottom of the Avon valley, where the tide and the river meet. From its bridge there is a pretty view both up and down the valley. The church stands on a rise at the west end of the village, and is a cruciform structure with a central tower and an outstanding stair turret. The chancel alone has aisles. The interior has lost its screen, but retains a parclose. On the arch of the north transept is carved the diminutive figure of a bishop.

A track down the side of the estuary, the creeks of which have to be crossed by stepping-stones, will take the traveller over a hill to Bigbury. Bigbury Church preserves its original tower, which carries a spire, but the rest of the fabric has been rebuilt. On the north wall are fixed two brasses, representing the daughters of William de Bigbury (*temp.* Edward III). The pulpit and lectern were brought here from Ashburton in 1774. The latter had been the gift of Bishop Oldham (1504–19) and was surmounted in characteristic fashion by the bishop's favourite bird, an owl, but the parishioners, preferring insight to wisdom, or more likely lacking both, struck off the head of the owl and

replaced it by that of an eagle. The carver has, however, managed to convey to the substitute an expression of melancholy astonishment at finding itself in such ill-assorted company. From the village a road runs down to the mouth of the estuary, which can also be reached by a longer lane overlooking the valley. As at Thurlestone, on the other side of the mouth of the Avon, the creation of an extensive golf course has led to the development of the neighbourhood into a residential estate to which has been given the name of Bigbury-on-Sea. The shore, which by a strip of sand is connected with a large islet, is lined with bungalows, and is enclosed by some very striking cliff scenery. From Bigbury-on-Sea a lane leads up a combe to Ringmore, where there is a little aisless Norman Church with a tower forming its south porch. On the road to Kingston is a holy well beneath a foliated arch. From Kingston, where the church has a rudely-fashioned tower, a lane leads down to the mouth of Erme, whose estuary is as beautiful in its way as that of the Avon. The scenery, though less bold and striking, has a sylvan suavity which is quite as charming. The traveller may catch a further glimpse of the wooded beauty of the Erme valley by taking a lane leading northwards from Kingston to Oldaport Farm standing above a creek of the estuary. Behind the farm are the remains of an embankment and a deep ditch overgrown with trees. They are said to be the remnants of some extensive fortifications once defended by round towers. To the north of Oldaport is the town of Modbury on the Kingsbridge and Plymouth road. Modbury runs down one side of a valley and rises on the other, and has a look of mid-Victorian primness and respectability, but its staid traditions are carried over from Tudor days. It was the seat of the Champernownes, who lived here in dignified leisure. Sir Richard Champernowne had a taste for music and had a private orchestra of such note that it was summoned to play before Henry VIII at Windsor. Its skill pleased the monarch, himself no mean musician, so well

that he kept it at court until wearied of it. The king with fine delicacy refrained from any inquiries about the expense of these 'command performances', and when Queen Elizabeth proposed to confer upon the musicians a similar honour, Sir Richard declined it, as his previous visit had left him 'crippled in fortune'. 'I'll cripple him still further,' exclaimed the royal virago in a rage. 'He shall play to a tune of my setting this time'; and she promptly confiscated several of his manors. The old house of the family still stands at the west end of the town 'crippled' like its former owner, for it has been reduced to a single wing. Modbury Church stands on the hill at the west entrance to the town. It is a large cruciform Perpendicular building with a west tower surmounted by an octagonal broach spire built in 1621. In the transepts are some canopied recesses containing effigies of the Champernownes, which, with the exception of one of a fourteenth-century knight, are dreadfully disfigured.

To explore the further beauties of the Erme valley, the traveller will have to go to Ivybridge. Ivybridge, like South Brent, hangs on the skirts of Dartmoor. The Erme comes down from the hills and flows through the town beneath a picturesque bridge. There is a charming bit of river scenery between the bridge and the railway station. The river is overhung by trees and rattles among the boulders at the bottom of a deep channel,

> where it doth glide and glance
> With a motion of sweet sound and radiance,

but the scene is spoilt by a huge paper mill at the entrance of the town. The little town itself consists of one long street, and is not particularly interesting. By proceeding up the valley and passing under the railway, above which stands Stowford House, embodying a portion of the old seventeenth-century home of the Williams family, the traveller can reach Harford, where he will get on to the moor. Harford is a little cluster of houses on a ledge of the

THE ERME, NEAR IVYBRIDGE

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moor above the river. It has a small Perpendicular church with a well-kept churchyard at the entrance of which is a Latin cross. In the chancel is an altar tomb with a brass to Thomas Williams (1566). He was Speaker of the House of Commons, but was eventually elevated to 'another place', for 'he now in heaven with Great Jove doth reign', his epitaph declares. There is another brass on the south wall to John Prideaux (1639). The memorial was erected by his son John Prideaux, Bishop of Worcester (1641–50), who was a zealous royalist and is represented on the brass in a doctor's gown. Prince says of him: 'Being driven to shift for himself betimes, and having a pretty good tunable voice,' he aspired to the parish clerkship of Ugborough, but was outclassed by a competitor who surpassed him in 'tuning the psalm'. But Prideaux's defeat proved a blessing in disguise. 'If I had been parish clerk of Ugborough,' he was wont afterwards to say, 'I had never been Bishop of Worcester.' To the south of the church rises Harford Moor, and on its summit, just above the Ivybridge reservoir, is the Hangershall rock, an imposing mass of granite. Between it and a rifled barrow is a long stone row running north and south to the top of Butterdon Hill. From the edge of the moor, which is buttressed by the two Ugborough beacons, there is a good view of the valley of the Avon. A mineral railway runs over the moor, and some four miles to the north-north-west of the Hangershall rock, on the western bank of the river, is a fine stone circle, fifty-four feet in diameter. From the circle a stone row crosses the moor northwards for some two miles and terminates in a ruined kistvaen on the summit of Green Hill. To the east of the circle, on the top of White Barrow Hill, is a fragment of Petre's Cross; whilst to the north of the circle, on the other side of the river near its confluence with Red Lake brook, is Erme Pound, a circular enclosure much encumbered with stones. Numerous hut circles are scattered over the moorland slopes between the Erme and the Avon. By crossing the Erme at Harford bridge on his descent from

the Hangershall rock, and skirting the stream up the valley, the traveller will see on the hill-top above him two other granite masses, the Tristis rocks. Near them on the south-west, but almost overgrown by furze and bracken, is another small circle with a stone row attached to it. Higher up the valley, draping its eastern slope, is a copse of stunted oak trees, known as Piles wood. From Harford a lane leads to Cornwood, a picturesque village standing above the valley of the Yealm, another moorland stream which flows through the South Hams. Near the picturesque village inn is a memorial cross to Frederick Rogers, Lord Blatchford, and to the north-east of the village, near a bridge, is Wisdom, the old home of the Rogers. To the north of Wisdom, on the top of the moor above Combe Farm, is another lengthy stone row. Below the row, draping the sides of a ravine through which the Yealm flows, are the Hawns and Dendles woods. Yet another stone circle and row are at Tolchmoor Gate, near the Lee Moor clayworks, on the road from Cornwood to Tavistock. Behind the clayworks rises Pen Beacon and Shell Top, which command a view of Plymouth Sound. Cornwood Church, to the south of the village, contains a screen, a Jacobean pulpit, and a fourteenth-century sedilia. Hall House, to the north of Cornwood, was the residence of Colonel Chudleigh, the father of the notorious Duchess of Kingston, whose trial for bigamy in 1776 was a *cause célèbre*. 'She was a coarse, licentious woman', whom Foote ridiculed as 'Kitty Crocodile'. Mrs. Montague described her appearance in 1749 at a masquerade in withering terms: 'Miss Chudleigh's dress or undress was remarkable. She was Iphegenia ready for the Sacrifice but so naked that the priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim.' Sir John Dunning, however, it is said, at her trial managed to make her 'shed tears', but they must have been crocodile tears.

Between Cornwood and Ivybridge, a little to the south of the railway bridge, is the farmstead of Fardel, once a seat

of the Raleighs. It has a picturesque gabled porch, and a detached chapel lighted by a Decorated east window and two lancets, and retains its piscina. In its courtyard was discovered an ogam stone, now in the British Museum. Two and a half miles to the south of Ivybridge, and reached by a road keeping company with the Erme, is Ermington, where the church displays the curiosity of a leaning spire. The interior contains a good Jacobean screen and a baluster screen beneath the tower. There is a brass to William Strachleigh (1582) and his wife, and a Renaissance tomb of Christopher Chudleigh, the husband of William Strachleigh's daughter and heiress Christina. Christina's face was fair, and a pretty local legend relates that the spire of the church got the crick in its neck through looking down to see her enter the building in her bridal dress. Above the tomb are two helmets, and upon it is a stone from a now demolished priest's house, dated 1585. Strachleigh, the old seat of the Strachleighs, a gaunt Jacobean mansion, now a farm, is a mile and a half to the west of Ivybridge.

From Ermington a road runs more or less parallel to the course of the Erme till it joins the road from Modbury to Plymouth, when the river is lost to sight in the woods which envelop Flete House. In a valley to the south-west of Flete is Holbeton, with a fine spired church standing in an imposing position in the centre of the village. The church has a dignified and richly furnished interior, retaining its original side screens. In the north chapel is an old Norman font and an elaborate seventeenth-century monument. The traveller, however, who is more interested in scenery than ecclesiology, instead of taking the road to Holbeton from Flete bridge should, by permission, pursue the private drive through the grounds of Flete House, which border the river all the way to its mouth. It is a fascinating ramble, for the Erme ' glideth at her own sweet will ' amongst the trees so stealthily that one can scarcely tell where the salt water meets with the fresh, until one emerges from the woods near Mothecombe (Moth-ecombe),

to find the dun banks of the estuary opening upon the 'limpid blue and evanescent green' of the sea. Mothecombe is a quaint cluster of thatched cottages at the head of a combe, with a coastguard station below it, on the shore of the estuary. From Mothecombe a dull and featureless road runs to Noss Mayo, but the traveller can relieve the tedium of the journey by making a descent from it by a steep lane to the derelict church of Revelstoke standing below the cliffs in a copse on the margin of a small beach. The church, which has a saddle-backed tower, is in a state of advanced decay, but its forlorn situation on this little ledge, 'under which the bright sea heaves', is peculiar and pathetic.

> Here lie the bones of ancient men,
> Old knights, and over them the sea wind sings
> Shrill, and chill, with flake and foam.

Near the church is a rather striking-looking cliff. At Noss, overlooking a creek in the estuary of the Yealm, is a very elaborate modern church which has been substituted for a derelict building at Revelstoke; but far more fascinating than the church itself is the exquisitely grouped picture which it presents from the end of the little creek above which it is perched. Newton Ferrers stretches itself along the water-side immediately opposite, and the hill-side behind is dotted with modern residences. Newton Church, like its neighbour, stands above its village and contains a triple sedilia and several squints, one of which, at the west end of the nave, opens into the north aisle. Some four miles to the north of Newton Ferrers is Yealmton (Yampton), half hidden amongst foliage in a pretty situation above the Yealm. The church was rebuilt in 1850 by Butterfield, and its graveyard contains an inscribed stone. Within the church is a palimpsest brass of 1580 and a good brass of Sir John Crocker (1508), the cup- and standard-bearer of Edward IV. Notwithstanding his former Yorkist sympathies, he took a leading part in the suppression of Perkin

Warbeck's rebellion. Near the bridge, on the Modbury road, is a cave in which the bones of extinct animals have been found, and in the wooded grounds of Kitley, an Elizabethan mansion overlooking the estuary, is another cavern.

The peninsula between the Yealm and the Plym is of less interest and beauty. It is a rather bare and elevated plateau intersected by two combes, the most easterly of which runs up to the village of Knighton. At the mouth of this combe, looking down upon a rocky beach, is Wembury Church, a solitary building chiefly remarkable for its desolate situation. It contains some monuments of the Hele and Calmady families, and the helmet of Sir Warwick Hele. The old mansion of the Heles, which Risdon described as 'a sightly seat for show set in a noble park', has disappeared, but Langdon, the home of the Calmadys, rebuilt in 1707, stands inland above the combe. Facing it is a fine barn dated 1760. Wembury village is said to have been the scene in 851 of a conflict between the men of Devon and the Danes, and is worth a visit for the sake of the fascinating view to be obtained from its warren. The spectator gazes down upon the estuary of the Yealm stretching far inland, its 'glassy waves' dotted with house-boats and enclosed by smoothly descending hill-sides. With Newton Ferrers and Noss, grouped harmoniously around their creek, the picture is as intriguing as the view of the Salcombe estuary from the neighbourhood of Bolt Head. Nearer Plymouth is a second combe running down to the sandy beach of Bovisland, below Staddon Down with its formidable array of forts. Plymstock, to the north-east, is now virtually a suburb of Plymouth, but it has a fifteenth-century church with a fine screen. The Plym estuary has long lost its beauty, for it is Plymouth's ancient waterway, and the great town has now surrounded it and exploited its maritime conveniences after the fashion of commercial cities, without any regard for its artistic amenities. Some degraded vestiges of its beauty, however, still linger round Hove Pool. Radford, the mansion of the

Harris family, whose monuments are in Plymstock Church, is near the Pool. Sir Walter Raleigh, on his arrival at Plymouth in 1618, was kept here for a while in the custody of Sir Christopher Harris.

Those who know the Plym only as the slatternly drudge of Plymouth will rectify their impression of its character when they visit its upper reaches, for it is a moorland stream and has much the same sylvan beauty as its neighbours. But it only escapes contamination above Plympton. Plympton well merits a visit, for though time and change have deprived it of some of its historic features, its associations and some savour of antiquity still cling to it. It is a dual village and, like some Cornish places, it grew up round two different centres. One centre was its castle and the other its priory. Both fortress and monastery have virtually disappeared, but the villages still stand apart. Plympton St. Mary, the ecclesiastical domain, stands on the line of the old ridgeway which now forms the main road from Ivybridge to Plymouth. The church is a noble Perpendicular building with side chapels, a three-storied south porch, and a pleasing tower. It contains a sedilia, and a few fragments of its ancient glass. There are two recumbent effigies of mail-clad warriors—Philip Courtenay (1514) and Richard Strode (1464), the latter under an elaborate canopy—and a seventeenth-century mural monument of Sir William Strode (1637) and his two wives. The remnants of the priory are to be found amongst some mills to the south of the church. They consist of a thirteenth-century refectory over a Norman undercroft, and a kitchen. A neighbouring cottage occupies the site of the priory mill. The priory was founded by Bishop Warelwast in 1121 for Augustinian Canons, and took the place of an already existing collegiate church. Warelwast himself is said, when old and blind, to have retired to the monastery to die. Plympton St. Maurice, or Plympton Erle, stands on a rather higher level to the south of its sister township. It was a more important place than its neighbour, for it was a

borough town and until the Reform Act returned two members of Parliament. Its castle was built by Richard de Redvers in the reign of Henry I. It was partly destroyed by Stephen in his struggle for the crown. Leland described it as ' a fair large castle with a donjon ; the walls yet stand, but the lodgings within be decayed ' ; yet it was made the Royalist head-quarters in the district by Prince Maurice in 1643. There now only remain a lofty mound surmounted by the crumbling remnants of a circular keep and the earthworks of its base court. The church, facing the castle, is neither so fine a building nor so well exposed as St. Mary's. It has a good porch and preserves its sedilia. To the south-east of the church is the Grammar School, founded in 1536 by the Eliseus Hele, who is buried at Bovey Tracey, and built over a colonnaded basement. On an adjoining wall is a tablet marking the site of the birthplace of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Sir Joshua was born in 1723, and his father was master of the school. When in 1760, after a sojourn in Rome, he finally settled down in Leicester Square, he stepped at once into the very front rank of the portrait-painters of his time. ' Reynolds is without a rival,' wrote Johnson in 1760, ' and continues to add thousands to thousands.' His clients were all fashionable folk, which made Johnson say that Reynolds thought that the world consisted merely of people in lace coats. He had an expansive manner but a self-reserved nature, and owed not a little of his popularity to his ' diplomacy '. Mrs. Thrail complained that he had ' too frigid a heart ', but wielded ' too warm a pencil '. In 1763 Sir Joshua brought Dr. Johnson into Devonshire, but they stayed most of the time in Plymouth and were taken in an Admiralty yacht to see the Eddystone. The town of Plympton Erle stands to the south of its church and preserves its old Guildhall, the large Queen Anne mansion of the Trebys, and one or two houses supported on columns. The portrait which Reynolds presented to the Corporation, when elected mayor of his native borough in 1773, he stipulated should be hung in

the Guildhall ' in a good light ', but the only light in which the townsfolk viewed the gift was a pecuniary one, for they sold it to the Earl of Egremont for £150. They evidently preferred the colour of the Earl of Egremont's guineas to the colours which the great artist ' mixed with his brains '. When Sir Joshua himself saw it, it was hung between two other pictures. ' They'll help to show it up,' artlessly explained the town clerk, who seemed to believe in the virtue of contrast. The painter looked at them and at once recognized them as previous works of his own, but he left the clerk in blissful ignorance of the fact. To the west of the town is a hill crowned with a grass-covered mass of rock which commands a fine view of the Plympton valley. Old Newnham, a sixteenth-century mansion once the home of the Strodes, is to the north-east of the town, near the Torry river. On a slope to the north of the adjoining village of Colebrook is Borringdon, the discarded mansion of the Earls of Morley, now a farm. It is a lofty sixteenth-century house with projecting turrets and an earlier wing. The portico bears the family arms, and the royal arms are over the fireplace in the great hall. A hill to the north of the house is crowned by a prehistoric earthwork. A road from Plympton leads over a ridge into the valley of the Plym, where the river is spanned by a picturesque bridge, one of the most popular beauty spots in the vicinity of Plymouth. The river is smothered in woods, and a beautiful walk runs up through the trees, between the stream and a leat to where a railway viaduct crosses the chasm.

CHAPTER XIV

THE THREE TOWNS

O the fair town of Plymouth is by the sea side,
The Sound is so blue, and so still, and so wide,
Encircled with hills and with forests all green
As a crown of fresh leaves on the head of a queen.
O dear Plymouth town, and O blue Plymouth Sound!
O where is your equal on earth to be found.

OLD SONG

WHATEVER may be a native's natural pride in the great city of Plymouth, the casual visitor at least will contemplate 'the three towns' with rather mixed feelings. They present an animated but disturbing spectacle. On one hand they crystallize all the maritime glories of Devon, whilst on the other they are a painful intrusion on the serene and soothing tranquillity of the West Country. Fresh from his rambles among the sequestered lanes and brawling watercourses of the South Hams, the traveller, at the very verge of the county where Nature has prepared as an enchanting climax to his rambles the broad flowing Tamar, comes upon this huge centre of warlike activity bristling with

> The armaments which thunder strike the walls
> Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
> And monarchs tremble in their capitals.

From the 'once romantic shores' of the noble river, 'nature's face seems banished and estranged', for instead of

> The daisied green sward down the stream
> Unsightly brick-lanes smoke and clanking engines gleam.

It is, however, fitting that 'the shire of the sea kings',

which has played so large and so distinguished a part in our naval history, should possess the largest naval arsenal in the kingdom. Yet it was not out of mere compliment to the maritime traditions of Devon that Plymouth was given its dockyard. It was because the Sound provided the Government with a capacious landlocked harbour sheltered on every side but the south, and with ready access to the sea. This openness, however, militated to some extent against Plymouth's development as a port. In heavy southerly gales the anchorage was not safe, and the situation of its harbour exposed it to attacks from Brittany. It was not until the reign of William III that it became a naval base.

Plymouth rose from very humble beginnings. It was from the first a triplet, but the three towns of early times were the three fishing villages of Sutton Ralph, Sutton Valetort, and Sutton Prior, all congregated in the vicinity of Sutton Pool, which was Plymouth's ancient harbour, and was apparently provided with a castle to ensure its security. Leland says : ' On a rocky hill hard by the south side of the mouth where the shippes lyeth is a strong castle quadrate, having at each corner a great round tower. It seemeth to me no very old piece of work.' It possibly occupied the site of the present citadel. Sutton Prior, which belonged to the monks of Plympton, has been described as the real nursing mother of Plymouth, for it grew into a town and changed its name to Plymouth on the occasion of its incorporation in 1439.

However much the lover of unspoilt nature may feel distressed at Plymouth's desecration of the beauties of the Tamar, yet he cannot afford to ignore the city, for apart from its historic renown and its natural importance as a naval station, a sojourn within its walls is necessary to complete his impression of the Devonshire coast. Plymouth Sound is not only one of the finest natural harbours in the country, but it presents one of the most striking seascapes in the country. It is a lake-like expanse three miles

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long and three miles broad formed by the combination of the estuaries of the Plym and the Tamar. It is girdled by softly-swelling hills, thickly wooded on the west, which almost complete its circuit. Plymouth occupies the whole of its northern shore. The city is not an easy place to describe. It is almost Venetian in the multiplicity of its waterways, the visitor is always coming across them, but it is not at all Venetian in its aspect, but very English and modern. Like all great commercial and industrial cities, it is a dense medley of stately thoroughfares and mean side streets with a fringe of gaily-tiled suburban residences, and presses closely upon the water's edge. From this welter of brick and mortar one splendid site stands out in unobscured grandeur. When the visitor steps upon the Hoe he can understand the pride with which Devonshire people regard Plymouth, for here all the historical traditions of the place are brought to a focus. To Devonshire folk there is no sight comparable to Plymouth Hoe. If Devon is the glory of England, Plymouth Hoe is the glory of Devon. It is an extensive terrace immediately overlooking the Sound, and from this platform you can get an unobstructed view of the blue landlocked basin, and see through the gap in its coronet of hills the slender column of the Eddystone Lighthouse rising spectrally in the dim distance. The Hoe epitomizes all the long romance of Plymouth's maritime history, and on it most of its stirring episodes have their cherished memorials. Its memories run back into legend. Spenser alludes to it as the scene of the first great adventure 'in this rough island's story'. It is

> The Western Hogh, besprinkled with the gore
> Of mighty Goemot, who in stout fray
> Corineus conquered.

It was the observation station from which in after years the townsfolk watched the departure and landing of their mercantile ventures. When on a Sunday in August 1573 the news was whispered that Drake had returned from his

voyage round the world, it was to the Hoe that the congregation flocked out of St. Andrew's Church and left the preacher to finish his sermon to the empty benches. On the Hoe it was too that the famous sea-captain was (according to the time-honoured tradition) playing bowls when the approach of the Armada was reported by a skipper who had seen it off the Lizard

> Long miles away from blue Mounts Bay
> The warring galleons came.

But Drake went on with his game. 'Noon passed,' says Froude, 'but nothing was seen; at length towards three in the afternoon, the look-out man on the hill reported a line of sail on the western horizon, the two wings being just visible, but were gradually seen to unite as they rose above the rim of the sea.' It advanced in 'a crescent-shaped formation which measured seven miles from tip to tip'. Drake finished his game of bowls and waited until the great Leviathan had passed the Sound. Then he put to sea in its track and did not leave it until

> 'Helpless rolled the great Armada, shorn of all its pomp and pride.

It was likewise from the Hoe that the people watched the departure of the *Mayflower* in 1620 when it sailed for the new Plymouth beyond the sea. Again it was from the Hoe that Smeaton, in 1757, dimly observed the rearing of Eddystone Lighthouse and thanked God for its safety when 'a tall white pillar of spray shot upwards in the air' as a signal that it still stood unshaken by the violence of the waves. But perhaps the most suggestive spectacle disclosed from the Hoe was the view which the townspeople obtained in 1815 of the *Bellerophon* floating in the blue water of the Sound with the captive Napoleon, once the scourge of Europe and the terror of England, on board scowlingly pacing the deck in the consciousness of final overthrow.

The Hoe is Plymouth's promenade and the only sea-front which it possesses. It gives the city some claim to be regarded as a watering-place as well as a port and naval station, for beneath it is a fine stretch of sand and a pier. It occupies nearly the whole width of the promontory which stretches between Mill Bay and Sutton Pool. In its centre rises a huge but ugly naval war memorial, a rather flamboyant monument of the tercentenary of the destruction of the Armada, a replica of Boehm's fine statue of Drake and the top of Smeaton's lighthouse. At the eastern end of the promenade is the citadel, an aggressively arrogant-looking building erected in the reign of Charles II, like the old feudal castles, not only for the defence of the town but ' as a check to the rebellious spirits of the neighbourhood '. Within the enclosure is a statue of George II in the costume of a Roman soldier. To the south of the pier, rearing its great bulk from the Sound, is Drake's Island, which at the Restoration was made a State prison and in which Lambert the regicide was interned until his death. By passing beneath an archway in the citadel the visitor can reach the Barbican, an open space near the entrance of Sutton Pool and fronting the quay. In the roadway adjoining the quay is a stone commemorating the departure of the *Mayflower*.

Plymouth possesses a composite but impressive group of public buildings, adjoining Bedford Street, and forming with St. Andrew's Church three sides of a quadrangle.

Facing one another across the square are the Guildhall and Law Courts in one great block, and the Council Offices. The Guildhall, built in 1874, has a series of painted windows illustrating the chief events in the history of the city and contains some portraits, one of which is a half-length of Sir Francis Drake, dated 1594, and the municipal regalia, including a drinking cup dated 1535. The old Guildhall has been turned into a library. St. Andrew's Church is a fine but dark Perpendicular edifice, with a handsome tower built by ' one Thomas Yonge, a merchant of Plymouth '. It contains a sculptured stone pulpit, a carved oak lantern,

and a number of monuments, among which is Chantrey's striking bust of Dr. Zachary Mudge and a poetical epitaph to Charles Mathews, who died in Plymouth in 1835. He is said to have been buried on the spot where Admiral Blake's heart had been previously interred. In a recess in the north porch is a female effigy. In 1676 the Merry Monarch, no doubt with his tongue in his cheek, held in the church ' a mission of healing ', when he ' touched ' for the King's Evil.

Dr. Johnson, who suffered from that malady, on his visit to Plymouth nearly a century later, sat in one of the pews and listened to a sermon composed for his benefit by Dr. Mudge. The Proprietory Library is in Cornwall Street and contains the Cottonian collection presented to the town in 1852, and some pictures, amongst which are some portraits by Reynolds. The Athenaeum in George Street has a good museum attached to it, and there is a Municipal Museum and Art Gallery in Tavistock Road. Charles Church in Green Street is a spired, but not inspired, building begun in 1640 but not consecrated till 1664. Near its altar are buried Captains Kirby and Wade, who were shot for cowardice on their arrival in the Sound in 1703. There are a few old houses in Plymouth. Palace Court, ' the goodly house towards the haven ', where Catharine of Aragon was lodged on her arrival in England in 1501, was demolished for the erection of a board school. To the south of St. Andrew's Church is ' the Abbey ', a gabled fifteenth-century priest's house. In St. Andrew Street is a house with an Elizabethan front, in New Street is the house once occupied by Drake's captains, and in Southside are some remnants of a Franciscan friary, now embodied in a brewery. A Dominican friary, which was once in its neighbourhood, has disappeared. The Catwater, the estuary of the Plym, borders the eastern side of the city and runs inland as a creek towards Plympton. It is a fine sheet of water, at the southern entrance of which is Mount Batten crowned by a round tower and transformed into a hydroplane depot.

SUTTON POOL, PLYMOUTH

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Plymouth is a port as well as a naval station and garrison town. The docks, Millbay and Sutton Pool, are to the west and east respectively of the Hoe. Millbay opens into the Sound and Sutton Pool is at the entrance of the Catwater. The breakwater which protects the harbour, and carries both a lighthouse and a fort, is two miles down the Sound. It was constructed in 1812 by Rennie, and is two-thirds of a mile long, and has projecting wings. Plymouth owes its water supply, as his portrait in the Guildhall declares, to its great waterman Sir Francis Drake,

> Who with fresh streams refreshed this towne that first,
> Though kist with waters, yet did pine for thirst.

When Member of Parliament for the borough he secured an Act for the construction of a leat to bring water from Dartmoor, and a visit is annually paid by the Corporation to the source of its supply below Sheepstor, where the great seaman's memory is toasted in both water and wine.

Stonehouse is the Cinderella of this family of towns. It is a collection of unprepossessing streets insinuating itself between Plymouth and the long creek which runs up from the Hamoaze and separates Devonport from the rest of the city. Its site terminates in a shoe-like promontory, of which the Devil's Point is the great toe. The town contains the Royal Naval Hospital, the Marine Barracks, and the Royal Victualling Yard.

Devonport occupies an elevated position on the eastern shore of the Hamoaze (Hamóze), and is reached by a bridge over Stonehouse Pool. It is Plymouth's great workshop, for it contains the Government dockyard. Though the nautical possibilities of the Hamoaze had been discovered by Raleigh it was not until the reign of William III that the old repairing shops on the shores of the Catwater were supplemented by a dockyard at Devonport, which was constructed in 1691. But this was only a small affair of five acres. The dockyard now covers 240 acres and has a

water frontage of nearly four miles. It stretches from Devonport to Keyham and contains the Naval Barracks. Though it furnishes an entertaining spectacle for the mechanic, for the lover of the picturesque this titanic factory for the production of munitions of war has only a sinister interest. It shuts out the peaceful prospect of the Hamoaze and substitutes for it a vision of the terrible potentialities of these 'bloated armaments' when the concert of Europe gives one of its devastating performances. Devonport is a garrison town as well as a naval station and has some large barracks. One sight, however, Devonport possesses which the tourist will find quite fascinating. It is the view from Mount Wise across the entrance of the Hamoaze to the woods of Mount Edgecombe, 'luxuriant with their annual leaves'. Mount Wise is Devonport's 'Hoe'. It is not so spacious or so majestic a platform as the Hoe, nor does it command so wide a prospect, but the view it discloses springs upon the spectator with much the same welcome sense of surprise. On the terrace is a massive statue of Captain Scott, the Antarctic explorer, and there is a statue of Lord Seaton in front of the Governor's residence. The town contains a classical town hall built in 1821 and a tall Doric column erected two years later to commemorate the town's assumption of the name of Devonport in lieu of its earlier designation of Plymouth Dock. Stoke Damerel Church, its mother church, is on the north-west, but its only ancient feature is its tower. The Church of St. Budeaux, on the outskirts of Keyham, stands on a hill, to which it was removed in 1563 from lower ground. Its churchyard, which was fortified by the Royalists and stormed by the Roundheads, commands a magnificent view of the Tamar and the Cornish hills.

Tamerton Foliot, two miles and a half to the north-east, lies at the head of a creek running up from the junction of the Tamar and Tavy. Its church has been rebuilt, but it preserves the recumbent effigies of a fourteenth-century knight and his lady, said to be Gorges. To the oak which

once stood on the village green there is attached a tragic story worthy of a sensational novel. John Copplestone of Warleigh, in a fit of rage at his godson's disgust at his licentious talk, threw his dagger at the lad as they came out of church and killed him on the spot. The boy was believed to be his illegitimate son. Copplestone saved his neck, however, by the surrender of thirteen manors in Cornwall. Warleigh, the home of the Copplestones, round which Miss Bray wrote a story, is a Tudor building with a large hall. Gilbert Foliot, Becket's great antagonist, was born at Tamerton. His life was a 'chronicle of actions just and bright'. When Bishop of London, he refused obedience to Becket and closed the doors of his cathedral against him. He was consequently excommunicated by Becket in 1167, but he remained Henry II's most trusted adviser to the end of his life.

CHAPTER XV

THE WESTERN FRINGE OF THE MOOR

Away, away, from men and towns
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While a touch of nature's art
Harmonizes heart with heart.

SHELLEY

THE two most convenient bases for exploring both the western side of the county and the western fringe of Dartmoor are Yelverton and Tavistock. Yelverton is Devonshire's Harrogate. It is not a spa, it is true, but it is an elevated moorland health-resort and tourist centre spread with a prodigal disregard for space round an extensive and tree-bordered green. It is very un-Devonian in appearance, and it comes upon the traveller as a surprise to find so trim a place on the verge of ' the great cold granite Sahara of England '.

Lying in the valley of the Tavy to the west of Yelverton is Buckland Abbey. The abbey was a Cistercian house founded in 1278 by Amica, the widow of Baldwin de Redvers. After its dissolution it was granted to Sir Richard Grenville, who converted its church into a mansion. ' The great hall is under the central tower, and the drawing-room is at the west end of the nave, upstairs, at the termination of a long gallery.' In 1581 the property was purchased by Sir Francis Drake. Some relics of the great sailor are preserved in the house, amongst which is his famous drum.

Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low,

If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port of heaven
An' drum 'em up the channel, as we drummed 'em long ago.

The village of Buckland Monachorum lies farther up the valley, a mile and a half to the north. It possesses a fine church with a heavily pinnacled tower, and a vaulted side chapel containing some memorials of the Drakes and a marble monument to Baron Heathfield of Gibraltar, ' who crowned a brilliant career with immortal glory '. The Tavy can be crossed at Denham bridge, which commands a pretty view of the river gliding through a wooded gorge. A road over an intervening hill descends to the banks of its estuary at Bere Ferrers and affords a passing glimpse of the Tamar and Saltash Bridge. Bere Ferrers lies on the shore of the Tavy estuary, and slopes down to a small beach where

curling to the strand
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and low.

The church at Bere Ferrers has a slender tower, and is a rather peculiar structure with an interesting interior. It contains the remnants of a screen, some carved bench-ends, some monuments and some effigies amongst which are those of Sir William de Ferrers and his wife (*c.* 1350), who rebuilt the church and made it a collegiate establishment, and who are represented as its founders in the glass of the east window. Whilst engaged in copying the design of this window in 1834 Charles Stothard, the artist, fell from a ladder and was killed. The De Ferrers had a castle here, but only a few traces of it now remain. The district is noted for its cherries and strawberries. The neighbouring village of Bere Alston, on the other side of the ridge, slopes down towards the valley of the Tamar. It was once a borough town, but was disenfranchised by the Reform Act. William Strode, one of the ' Five Members ', was once its representative. It is an unattractive place, but in its

vicinity some striking views of the Tamar valley can be secured.

The *raison d'être* of Yelverton's existence is its proximity to the moors. Plymouthians regard it as their 'hill station'. They resort to it both to brace themselves up by its breezes and to find relaxation in the complaisant contemplation of their waterworks. To view the latter they have to make an expedition into the valley of the Meavy. Meavy village lies at the bottom of the valley below the great Plymouth reservoir at Burrator. It is a picturesque little place by the side of its stream. In its centre spreads a huge hollow oak overshadowing a stepped cross. The church fronts it and completes the group. It has the miniature head of a bishop and a pastoral staff sculptured on its chancel arch. Beyond the river, which may be crossed either by stepping-stones or by a bridge, is a Latin cross. The road over the bridge leads south-east along the fringe of the moor to Cornwood, but there is also a path round the shoulder of the hill over which the Ivybridge road mounts. This will take the wayfarer above the Meavy valley to Nottor Farm, and put him in the way of reaching what are termed the Drizzlecombe Antiquities. The path, as it rises, commands a fine view of the Meavy valley, the Cornish hills, and the Burrator reservoir. The Drizzlecombe Antiquities are on Ditsworthy warren not far from the banks of the Plym and consist of a pound, some cairns, three stone rows, and three tall menhirs. The return to Yelverton should be made through the village of Sheepstor, which lies immediately under its striking and conspicuous tor. It is a picturesque but forlorn-looking little place set amid wild and desolate surroundings. It has a small church with a great display of modern woodwork, but its most remarkable possession is the very curious and unique sundial in the gable of its porch. Rajah Brooke, who died at his house at Burrator in 1868, is buried under a massive stone at the north-east corner of the graveyard. The Burrator estate was presented to him at the close of

his active career by his admirers. In the village, to the west of the church, is a Latin cross, and at the east end of the graveyard is the bull-ring, now turned into a tennis court. In the external face of its wall is a well shrine. The old vicarage is a fifteenth-century building with a newel staircase. There is a cavern amongst the crags of Sheepstor called the Pixies' Hole ; Squire Elford of Langstone is said to have hidden himself here when pursued by Cromwell's troops. To reach Yelverton from Sheepstor the traveller will have to cross the great barrage of the Plymouth reservoir at Burrator. The reservoir is 110 feet deep and forms a fine sheet of water overhung by Leather Tor, and by spreading ' its sleeping silver through the hills ' adds considerably to the beauty of the landscape. The neighbouring village of Dousland has, in consequence of its proximity to this artificial loch, become a sort of lake-side annexe to Plymouth, where devotees of the rod forgather to test their own skill and other people's credulity.

The road from Meavy bridge to Cornwood passes some more prehistoric antiquities. On the side of Ringmore Down there is a stone circle, and on the western side of Trowlesworthy Warren is a curious walled enclosure with two peculiar entrances, and a stone row. But the most popular sight in the district is Cadover (properly Cadaford) bridge, a small stone arch spanning the Plym. It is at the bottom of a shallow and unsheltered vale,

> Where ears of other sound can have no choice
> But various blusterings of the stubborn wind.

By the road-side approaching the bridge is a stone cross. From Cadover bridge the road leads to Shaugh Prior, a bleakly situated village on the shoulders of Shaugh Moor. The church has a tall tower and contains a carved fifteenth-century font cover. A rapid descent runs down to Shaugh bridge, which crosses the Plym just below its confluence with the Meavy. Overhanging the junction of the streams is the Dewer stone,

a mighty rock
Which has for unimaginable years
Sustained itself with terror and with toil
Over the gulf.

A matted garment of scrub is spread at the foot of the crag, and on its surface greenery bursts from ' the cracks of frost, like a smile striving with a wrinkled face '. The spot was one of the favourite haunts of the poet Carrington, whose name and the date of his death are cut on a rock above the cliff, whilst the poet himself finds a resting-place in Shaugh churchyard.

From Shaugh bridge the Plym valley may be followed to Bickleigh, below which the river enters a thickly-wooded defile which is a favourite resort with Plymouth excursionists. Bickleigh Church is modern, but retains its ancient tower and contains a monument with the effigy of Sir Nicholas Slanning (1599), who was killed in a duel with Sir John Fitz of Fitzford. They quarrelled at a dinner over a foolish boast, and the quarrel led to a brawl. ' The matter, however,' says Prince, ' was likely to have been composed, but the villain Fitz's man twitting his master with a " What child's play ! come to fight and now put up your sword," led to a renewal of the combat, and Slanning, in stepping back, caught his spurs in the ground and was foully killed.' Near the monument are the helmet and gauntlets of Slanning's son, ' one of the wheels of Charles' wain ', who fell at the siege of Bristol in 1643.

Tavistock, in contrast to Yelverton, lies low, for it is seated in the valley of the Tavy. This was not, however, its early position, for it probably originated in the stockaded enclosure with which Ordgar, the ealdorman in the tenth century, fortified the hill to the north of the town, and afterwards gravitated to the monastery which he founded, and his son Ordulph completed, in 981, on the bank of the river below. Tavistock Abbey eventually became the chief religious house in the county and possessed large estates. Subsequent to the Conquest, under the fostering

care of its monastic patron, Tavistock rose to considerable importance. In 1120 it obtained a market, in 1281 it became a stannary town, and from 1295 it sent two members to Parliament. In the fifteenth century it was noted for its woollens. Over the town the abbot exercised supreme jurisdiction. In the reign of Henry VIII a mitre was bestowed upon him ; yet the abbey did not bear the best of reputations. Two of its abbots were deposed, one was censured for preferring the chase to the chasuble, whilst the monks flaunted themselves in the streets of the town in the ' buttoned tunics ' and ' beaked boots ' of fashionable attire. The Dissolution of course put an end alike to the abbey's dissoluteness and devotion.

> Down, down it came—a fearful fall—
> Arch and pillar and roof tree and all.
> Stained pane and sculptured stone
> They lie on the greensward strown,
> Mitre and crozier all are flown,
> Mouldering walls remain alone,

to recall the glory of its palmy days. The abbey has gone, but Tavistock is still a flourishing town. It is a clean and comely place and makes a favourable impression on the visitor. It has a large and handsome parish church with a good tower pierced by a passage, and an additional south aisle. Within the church are the effigies of John Fitz and his wife (1589) and a large monument of Judge Glanville (1600) surmounted by his effigy, with the kneeling figure of his wife below, looking ' like a severe personification of justice '. The abbey stood on the south side of the church nearer the river, and its site is now occupied by the Bedford Hotel. In the churchyard opposite the hotel, and partly sunk in the ground, is the lavatory of the monastic cloister. Within the vicarage garden, on the opposite side of the road, are the remains of the abbey gateway, beneath the arch of which is a large stone coffin. Behind the vicarage is a square tower known as the ' still tower ', and three

inscribed stones, one of which has ogam characters. Behind the hotel, and near the bridge, is the monastic refectory, now turned into a Unitarian chapel, and a projecting chamber, now appropriated by the hotel. At the west end of the town is the gateway of Fitzford, the home of the Fitz family, now occupied as a private residence. Fitzford in 1644 came into possession of the notorious Sir Richard Grenville by his marriage with Lady Howard, the daughter of Sir John Fitz, of whom some sinister stories are told. She is alleged to have got rid of three husbands before she married Sir Richard. For her supposed crimes she is said to travel nightly between midnight and cockcrow from the gateway of Fitzford to Okehampton in a coach of bones, accompanied by a single bloodhound who brings back one blade of grass in his mouth.

> My ladye's coach hath nodding plumes,
> The driver hath no head,
> My ladye is an ashen white
> As one that long is dead.

Her journeys will not cease until every blade of grass in the old hunting park at Okehampton is gathered, so she is likely to long remain a 'grass widow'. In front of the gateway of Fitzford is Boehm's fine statue of Sir Francis Drake, who was born at Crowndale, which once stood on the banks of the Tavy to the south of the town. Two miles due south of Tavistock is Walreddon, an ancient seat of the Courtenays. William Browne, the poet, was born at Tavistock in 1590. His 'oaten reed' gave a thin echo of Spenser's 'trumpet's silver sound', but he never achieved much popularity. Mrs. Bray, the author of *The Borders of the Tamar and Tavy*, was the wife of a former vicar.

The neighbourhood of Tavistock abounds in pleasant walks. One of the most beautiful prospects in the neighbourhood is to be obtained from the Morwell rocks, two precipitous crags projecting from a wooded slope 300 feet above the valley of the Tamar. Both platforms command

impressive views of the winding and winsome river ' rolling its bright waves through the softening vale below '. The rocks are reached by a field path from Morwell, the old hunting lodge of the abbots of Tavistock, a fine quadrangular building with a towered and vaulted gatehouse, now turned into a farm. A path from the rocks through the woods leads down to a small quay by the river-side at Morwelham.

An interesting excursion may be made over Dartmoor to Princetown, which, besides disclosing some fine moorland scenery, will put the traveller in contact with another remarkable group of antiquities. It starts with a long climb over the shoulders of Cox Tor, and descends midway into the valley of the Walkham river. Overhanging the valley, on the south of the road, is Vixen Tor, one of the finest rock masses on the moor. It rises from the same level as the road, and when seen from a distance looks like a sphinx brooding over the mysteries of the moor, but on close inspection it appears more like two stout figures. From the neighbourhood of the Tor a fine view down the Walkham valley can be secured. At the end of the vista will be seen Saltash bridge and Plymouth Sound enclosed by Staddon Down and Penlee Point. The prehistoric antiquities are on the right of the road, beyond the bridge, as the traveller ascends towards the school. They consist of a number of well-defined hut circles, two parallel stone rows, each starting from a menhir, and a rifled kistvaen. North of the bridge, rising on either side of the valley, respectively, are the craggy summits of Staple Tor and Great Mis Tor, whilst to the south-east is King Tor. The road, after traversing the moor for some distance, crosses the Blackbrook and descends into the valley of the West Dart at Two Bridges, where it forks to Moreton Hampstead and Ashburton. To the north of the highway, by the side of the Blackbrook and near a clapper bridge, is Fitz's Well, enclosed by a shrine which bears the initials of John Fitz and the date 1568. Tradition declares that Fitz and his

wife, being bemused by the pixies, lost their way on the moor, and stumbled by accident on the well. A draught of its waters cleared their heads, and having recovered their senses they regained the path and proceeded safely homewards. Two Bridges lies in green surroundings at the bottom of the Dart valley, where the river is joined by its tributary the Cowsic, which higher up is crossed by a clapper bridge. Between the two streams is Beardown Tor, and on Devil's Tor is the Beardown Man, a tall lonely menhir. Beyond the Dart is Crockern Tor, the ancient meeting-place of the Devonshire miners. A couple of miles up the Dart the valley is clothed with a coppice of dwarf oak trees springing from a litter of moss-grown boulders, known as Wistman's Wood. The traveller, however, who goes as far as Two Bridges, will, if bound for Princetown, have overshot the mark, and to reach the prison will have to return along the Yelverton road, which at Okery is carried over the Blackbrook by a picturesque bridge. He can save himself this trouble by turning aside, on the outward journey, at the sixth milestone, down a tree-bordered road on the south before the descent into the Dart valley commences. Princetown stands on a hillside on the Yelverton road. The prison rises grimly like a huge warehouse from the slope below the town. This doleful dump for determined degenerates was originally erected in 1808 for the internment of the French and American prisoners captured during the French wars, and its granite gateway bears the motto, *Parcere subjectes*, an improved rendering of the more ancient *Vae Victis*. The French did not appreciate the tonic qualities of the Dartmoor air, and grew indignant over the barbarity of 'perfide Albion' in submitting their countrymen to such rigorous climatic conditions. 'For seven months in the year,' they complained, 'it is a *vraie Sibérie*, covered with unmelting snow, and when the snows go away the mists appear.' To these savage wastes the savage wastrels of society have since 1850 been consigned in the hope of

reclaiming them by setting them to reclaim the moor. He who has ' crossed the Alps ' is considered by them to have fully graduated in crime. Princetown itself stands 1,300 feet above sea-level, and is rather a prim-looking place, as if conscious of being on its best behaviour. It abounds in restaurants for the accommodation of the shoals of summer visitors, who seem to find a morbid excitement in contemplating the captives who may occasionally be seen in gangs turning their ingenious talents to account in ' cracking cribs ' amongst the granite boulders of the furzy moor. The wide strip of pasture-land in the vale below the prison owes such fertility as it possesses to the reluctant toil of the convicts. Princetown Church was built by the French war prisoners and contains a monument of Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, to whom the erection of the prison was due.

The Walkham valley has some attractive scenery and can be reached from Tavistock by a walk over the golf links on Whitchurch Down, on which stands a gaunt weather-worn cross. At Sampford Spiney, which is at the foot of Pu Tor, the traveller will get in touch with the river. The village has a small fifteenth-century church and a picturesque mullioned farm-house near it. Lower down the river can be crossed to Walkhampton, whose church is finely poised on the top of a hill above its village. It has a good tower and a passage squint, into the wall of which is built a piscina. Adjoining the graveyard is the church house, dated 1596. The large village of Horrabridge lies contrastingly at the bottom of the valley, spread along the banks of the river which subsequently flows through a prettily-wooded glen on its way to join the Tavy. Overhanging the confluence of the two rivers is a crag known as the Raven Rock. Near the hamlet of Grenofen is Sortridge, the home of the Pengellys, one of whom is commemorated by a monument in Whitchurch Church, where there is also a seventeenth-century tomb of the Moreings and a side screen.

On the Launceston road, which provides another pleasant

ramble, is Lamerton. Its church, set back amongst a group of trees, was destroyed by fire in 1877 and rebuilt two years afterwards. It contains a restored monument of the Tremaynes, dated 1588, with some small but cleverly sculptured figures. Collacombe Barton, the old home of the Tremaynes, lies in a dingle to the west. It is a fine old house with a classical gateway and a projecting porch opening into a large hall with a huge mullioned window, an ornamental plaster ceiling, and a fireplace, dated 1574, bearing the Tremayne arms. To the south of Lamerton is Sydenham Damerel, with Kit Hill rising in front of it beyond the Tamar. At Milton Abbot, a larger village strung along the Launceston road, the Cornish hills come into full view. Milton Abbot was a possession of the abbots of Tavistock, and its chief attraction is its proximity to Endsleigh, the palatial ' cottage ' of the Duke of Bedford, a long, low, irregular house in the Tamar valley with the river's ' playful tide '

> Now brightly gleaming in the sun,
> Now dancing over rock and stone

below it. On the hill above Milton is Kelly, delightfully enveloped in undulating woods. The church, near the Court, has a north-east window in which the ancient glass has been skilfully reconstructed. Bradstone, to the west of Kelly, has a church with a Norman arch, beneath which a later and smaller doorway has been inserted. A make-shift screen surrounds the altar, near which is a stone mouth intended to serve as a cresset stone. Opposite the church is the gabled and fantastically pinnacled gateway of the manor-house, a flat-faced building with a gabled porch. In a lane behind the house the capstone of a cromlech has been erected as a stile. By the side of the Launceston road, below Bradstone, is Dunterton Church, looking across the Tamar to the Cornish hills, and beyond it, overhanging the Tamar valley, is a small entrenchment. The constantly changing aspect of the Cornish hills is

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perhaps the chief charm of this journey to the Cornish border. There seems to be about them an

> infinite movement
> Still moving with you ;
> For, ever some new head and breast of them
> Thrusts into view.

A lovely view of the Tamar as it sweeps down through a wide vale to enter a wooded channel is disclosed from Greystone bridge, a many-arched structure which carries the road into Cornwall.

The finest excursion which the neighbourhood of Tavistock provides is the walk to Tavy Cleave and the Lydford Gorge. Amongst other incidental features, it displays the picturesquely peaked western front of Dartmoor. The ramble is, however, long and circuitous, and in places entails some rough climbing. In the course of his efforts to track the Tavy to its haunts amongst the moors the wayfarer will make the acquaintance of one or other of that curious old couple, Peter and Mary Tavy, who are said to have been once called into court as witnesses. They are more picturesque than entertaining. They lie on opposite sides of the river and between them is an upstanding rock which is a favourite haunt of the pixies. Peter has a rather pretty mill to show the visitor and Mary possesses a good churchyard cross, but their churches have been badly treated by restorers.

On White Tor is a stone-walled camp. On Langstone Moor, to the east of Peter Tavy, are several hut circles, a stone circle, a menhir, and a long stone row. Tavy Cleave can be reached by a road for either village, for the roads eventually unite at Hillworthy, above Hill Bridge. Facing the traveller on his way up are the two striking eminences of Ger Tor and Hare Tor, and it is round the former that the Tavy twines on its descent from the moor. By climbing Ger Tor and making his way to the next rocky summit the traveller will get an excellent view of the winding Cleave

below. The scene is wild and impressive rather than beautiful, for the Cleave is a bare and stony ravine through which flows the river,

> Whose plots of sparkling water tremble bright
> With thousand thousand twinkling points of light.

The ridge overlooking the Cleave, and the summit of Hare Tor in particular, command an extensive moorland panorama, with the rocky mass of Fur Tor rising in the background. By descending from this altitude and crossing the rifle range on Nottor Down to the west, the wayfarer can join the Okehampton road, and from it will find an indirect road leading into Lydford, which he will see lying in the valley below. Lydford is now nothing but a slender village of a single street. Before the Conquest it was one of the chief towns in Devon, and was possessed of a mint. The Conqueror ' wasted ' it, yet it subsequently managed to recover something of its original importance and became one of the principal stannary towns, where the law was administered with more zeal than discretion. ' Lydford Law ' was notorious for its summariness.

> I've often heard of Lydford Law
> How in the morn they hang and draw,
> And sit in judgment after.

The traditions seem to have been perpetuated in the district, for Sir Richard Grenville, the governor of its castle, was accused of exercising his powers tyrannically, and Judge Jeffreys once presided at its assizes with such barbarity that his ghost is said still to haunt the neighbourhood in the shape of a black pig. There was perhaps some excuse for this ready-made justice, for the Lydford glen in the reign of Charles I was infested by a gang of outlaws, similar to those who located themselves in the Doone valley. They were called the Gubbins, and were led by a man named Rowle. ' Gubbins' land,' says Fuller, ' is a

Scythia in England, and they pure heathens therein. Their language is the drosse of the dregs of the vulgar Devonian. They hold together like burrs; offend one, and all will avenge his quarrel.' Lydford has a castle at which Browne, the Tavistock poet, pokes fun:

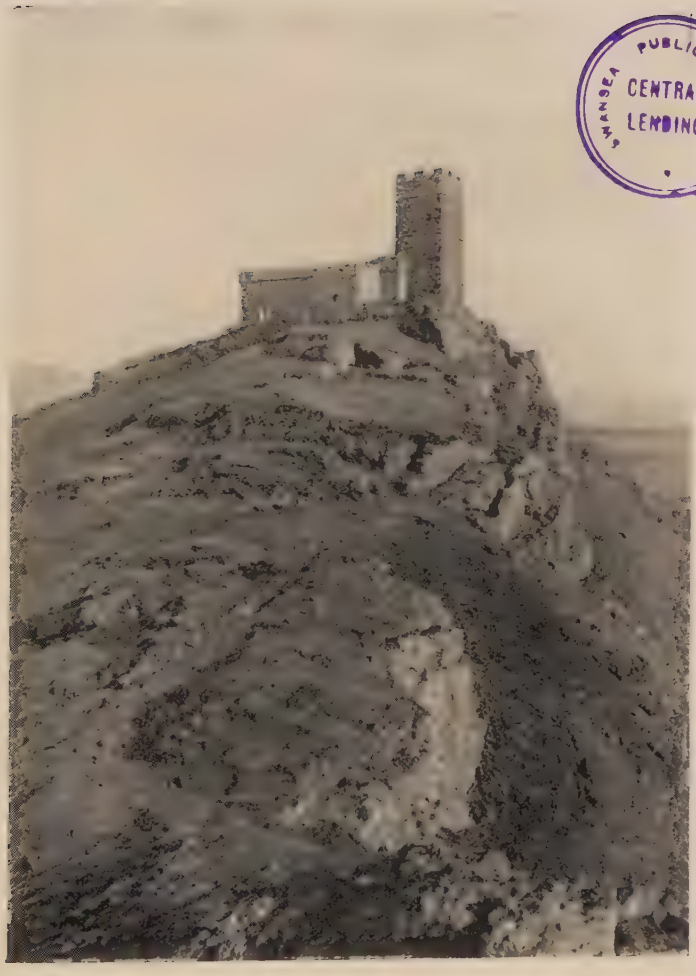
> They have a castle on a hill,
> I took it for an old windmill,
> The vanes blown off by weather.

It has, however, much more resemblance to a jail, which indeed it became, for Edward I made it the stannary prison. It fell into disuse and decay during the Commonwealth period. It stands in a mound at the south end of the village and consists of a ruinous square keep. The church close by is a modest and rather featureless fifteenth-century building with a tombstone near its south door bearing a punning epitaph on a watchmaker which ends: 'wound up in the hope of being taken in hand by his Maker, and of being thoroughly cleaned, repaired, and set going in the world to come.' This 'time-piece' apparently 'ran down' in 1802. The Gorge, the most remarkable spectacle of its kind in Devon, is just below the church. The river Lyd, which at Kitts Steps (about a mile above the village) issues in a spout from a cleft in the rocks, flows through a densely wooded valley and then rattles down a narrow and precipitously walled cañon some seventy feet deep. It is a most romantic bit of scenery.

> You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
> Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
> Crosses the chasm; and high above these grow
> With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,
> Cedars and yews and pines; whose tangled hair
> Is matted in one solid roof of shade
> By the dark ivy's twine.

A story is told of a horseman who, one dark, tempestuous night when the bridge was swept away by the storm,

unknowingly leapt over the chasm. On visiting the cleft next day he died of fright at the sight of the danger which he had actually surmounted. A path has been cut in the face of the rocks beneath the bridge, and pursues the struggling river through the woods for a couple of miles to a spot where a cascade shines like 'a pillar of white light upon the wall of purple cliff'. The gorge is a scene of extraordinary beauty, and surpasses any expectations which may be formed of it. The Tavistock road, on its way to the town, climbs over the shoulder of Brent Tor, one of the most conspicuous objects in the neighbourhood. It is an isolated and conical peak of volcanic rock with a cliffy protuberance on its north-west flank. Its summit is crowned with a diminutive church with a tower and battlemented parapet. It is dedicated to St. Michael, and originally belonged to the abbey of Tavistock whose abbots were accustomed to hold an annual fair on the tor on Michaelmas Day. There is not much to see in the church, but the hill commands a far-extending prospect. It is a long and rather tedious tramp from Lydford to Tavistock, but the wayfarer will find the tedium of the journey relieved by the fine view of the western flank of the moor, with Doe Tor in the centre, which it discloses.



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CENTRAL LENDING

BRENT TOR

CHAPTER XVI

THE NORTHERN GATE OF THE MOOR

Up the long corrie, through the screetan rents,
Past the last cloud-berry and stone-crop flower,
With no companion save the elements,
This peak of crumbled rock my lone watch-tower,
Bare ridges all around me, weather-bleached,
Of hoary moss and lichen-crusted stone,
Beyond all sounds of gladness or distress,
All trace of human feeling—only reach'd
From far below by the everlasting moan
The corrie sends—up I gaze alone
O'er the wide Ossianic wilderness.

SHAIRP

OF the principal gateways to Dartmoor, Okehampton may be regarded as the chief, for it not only commands the finest view of it but gives to it the most ready access. If not actually on the moor it is at its very foot and slopes up to meet it. There is, however, nothing bleak about its situation. To use an Irishism, Okehampton, though it stands high, lies low, for it reposes in a basin the bottom of which is some 300 feet above sea-level, and rising sternly above it are 'the heights' to which 'the tremulous vapours' cling. It is a quiet little country town of pleasing appearance ranged round a market place, a sort of 'sleepy hollow' amongst the hills well fitted to fulfil its natural destiny as a base for those who wish to explore the northern region of the moor. But in an evil moment, wearied of its own dullness, Okehampton delivered itself into the hands of the War Office, and the military now monopolize it as an armed camp during the best and brightest months of the year. They have converted it into an artillery range and scatter their shells all over the

moor, even as far as Cranmere pool. The thunder of guns reverberates constantly amongst the hills, whilst hideous notice boards face the traveller everywhere and warn him of the risks he incurs in wandering over the wilds. When the red flags wave on the summits of the tors the moor is taboo to the summer visitor, unless he desires to spend his time studying the flight of projectiles or in dodging high explosives. Yet nowhere does the moor offer a sterner or more provocative challenge to the tourist than here, and nowhere does it provide him with a richer recompense for his labours, for its wilds are cleft with a labyrinth of 'shadowy-pencilled valleys' which invade the privacy of the hills.

The district owes its grandeur to Yes Tor and its noble company of attendant heights, but it derives its beauty from the streams which encircle their flanks and thread their way through the town. Besides the two Okement rivers, which unite just below Okehampton to find their way eventually to the Torridge, the Taw collects in the neighbourhood the waters with which it afterwards makes glad the heart of central Devon.

It is not the first time in the history of Okehampton that the soldier has taken a fancy to the inheritance of the citizen. As Okementon it was a market town before the Conquest, but the Normans came and turned it into a fortress and annexed the present artillery ground as a hunting park. The remnants of these feudal fortifications still stand in impressive decay outside the town overhanging the banks of the West Okement river. Of Okehampton's antiquities the castle is the chief. But there is a towered chapel pushed a little awkwardly into a corner of the market place in the centre of the town, and the parish church stands at the end of a fine avenue of beeches on a knoll on its outskirts. The chapel contains some remnants of its ancient woodwork, but of the parish church nothing of the original structure survives but the tower, for it was burnt in 1842. The town, otherwise, though

comely enough, does not make much show of anciently. One quaint little gabled house, however, is to be found in a lane behind the town chapel. Before searching for the ruins of the castle the visitor should take a walk through the little modern park adjoining the town, for it is not only rather unusual in character, but it also affords the spectator an opportunity of seeing something of the East Okement river, which the little park has ingeniously enmeshed. The survey will form a very suitable preliminary to a visit to the haunts of the sister stream. The castle is now nothing but 'a ruin hoary rising from some lofty groves' in the glen of the West Okement to the south-west of the town, and owes its interest chiefly to the beauty of its surroundings. It was built originally by Baldwin de Brionis, and passed eventually, by marriage, into the hands of the Courtenays, who reconstructed and enlarged it. It was finally dismantled in the reign of Henry VIII. The early rectangular keep, much shattered, stands on a lofty mound in the middle of an isolated ridge overhanging the banks of the river. The banqueting hall, chapel, and guard-room surround a small triangular court on the slope below, at the foot of which are some fragments of the gatehouse. It is all very ruinous, but its decay is masked by a profusion of foliage. A pathway beneath this 'odourous shade' is thrown round the ridge and forms a charming walk.

The tourist's first excursion in the Okehampton district will naturally be the ascent of Yes Tor. Yes Tor is, by common consent, if not by actual altitude, the monarch of the Dartmoor tors. Though really a long range, it seems to rise like a shapely pyramid to a height of 2,223 feet. Its elevation is surpassed by High Willhays, which claims a superiority of eleven feet. But High Willhays is more of a royal consort than a successful rival, for it is a mere prominence in the centre of the chain of which Yes Tor is the northern extremity. Yes Tor is easily climbed, though its slopes are exceptionally boggy. Though its summit lacks the rugged impressiveness of many of the

other tors, its shapeliness gives it sublimity and it commands far-reaching views of ' varnished groves, tall hills and gilded clouds '. To the north-east rises its companions, Mel Tor and Rough Tor.

But the ascent of Yes Tor is only an introduction to an extensive catalogue of rambles which its neighbourhood affords. The valleys have as many beauties to disclose as the hills. On each side of the Yes Tor chain are the deep and delightful gorges through which the Okement rivers worm their way to the plains. The West Okement babbles down ' a valley of wild charm ' spanned at its mouth by the Meldon viaduct—a tresseled iron structure some 150 feet high. The exploration of the Meldon valley is one of the most popular expeditions from Okehampton, for the valley is easily reached, and presents a typical moorland scene of wild and treeless slopes. Some distance up the glen the stream foams over a mass of tumbled boulders and forms what is known as the Island of Rocks. Even more beautiful, for its sides are clad with woods, is Belstone Cleave, the channel of the East Okement on the other side of Yes Tor, into which opens the pretty Halstock glen. Belstone village stands high upon the shoulders of its twin-peaked tor, and looks down from the ' shelving bank of turf ' which forms its upper green upon the valley of the Taw. Below, the river can be seen threading its way through a marsh beneath the western flanks of Cawsand (Cosdon) Beacon with Steeperton Tor rising boldly in the background to a height of 1,739 feet. On another little green below the village are some tall stones, which have, however, no nobility, for they are said to have been the supports of the parish stocks, but behind the village on the northern slope of the eastern tor is a small hut circle or ring barrow, known as the Nine Stones, now mutilated. A steep but pleasant road descends the Taw valley from Belstone to Sticklepath where the river emerges from its confinement. Sticklepath is a cheery-looking village bordering the Exeter road. At its west end is a spring

YES TOR, OKEHAMPTON

known as the 'Lady Well', and on a bank behind the spring is a menhir bearing a cross and an illegible inscription. There is another stone with an obliterated inscription beyond the village by the side of the Okehampton road. A Nonconformist chapel bears aloft on its gable a small wayside cross. This ramble along the flanks of the moors may be extended through the outskirts of the neighbouring village of South Zeal, by taking a road by the side of the copper mines to Throwleigh which lies on the eastern side of Cawsand Beacon. Throwleigh is rather an exasperating place; though visible for some distance, it takes a long time to reach, for the approach to it is provokingly circuitous. In spite of its remoteness, Throwleigh has attracted to itself a number of bungalow residences. Its church has a fine priest's doorway set in one of the chancel buttresses, and near the entrance to the graveyard is the old church-house. To the south-west of the village is Shilstone, a seventeenth-century farm-house with a picturesque front, and about a mile to the south-east is Wonson, once the seat of the Knapmans and subsequently of the Northmores. William Northmore, who was M.P. for Okehampton from 1713 till 1734, was a determined gambler, and like most gamblers he squandered a fortune. He is said to have lost £17,000 at one sitting through the turn of an ace of diamonds which played the deuce with him. To commemorate his ill-luck he had an ace of diamonds painted on one of the panels of his bedroom, and, it is said, 'cursed it every night before turning in instead of saying his prayers'. Between Throwleigh and Gidleigh there once existed a prehistoric village similar to Grimspound, surrounded by a wall, but it has been reduced to a mere heap of stones. The farmers who destroyed it for wall-making defended their action on the ground that 'whatever the Almighty put for their use 'twas right for them to take'. Behind Throwleigh rises the huge bulk of Cawsand Beacon to a height of nearly 1,800 feet. On its flanks are a number of hut circles and on its southern side

is Rayborough pool, a dangerous bog. Standing some little distance from the road to South Zeal is West Wyke, a small mansion, once the residence of the Battishills, built in 1656, which possesses an embattled gateway. South Zeal is a long village stretching along a by-road forming the chord to the arc made by the highway. It has in its centre a modest little sixteenth-century chapel surmounted by a curious belfry, and a good stepped cross. The 'Oxenham Arms', near the chapel, was once the mansion of the Burgoynes. About a mile to the north of South Zeal is South Tawton, its mother parish. It possesses a fine Perpendicular church containing a good marquetry pulpit and an effigy of John Wyke (1592). Near the entrance to the church is a picturesque church-house. In the centre of the village is a cross and there is the base and stump of another near a barn on the South Zeal road.

Okehampton is perhaps the best place from which to make an attempt to discover Cranmere pool. It is the most difficult object to find on the whole of the moor and the least satisfactory when found. 'I've know'd a party beat about the hills all day and come home and swear there was no Cranmere,' declares a character in *Christowell*. It is 'a pool of black moss water grimly gleaming through the waste' of a melancholy marsh. It lies as the crow flies about seven miles almost due south of the town and is at the bottom of a wide hollow some 1,800 feet above sea-level between Great Kneeset Tor and Whitehorse Hill. A track leads to it from the artillery camp as far as Okement Hill, but the traveller's best guide is his compass. The only interesting thing about the pool is that the bog which surrounds it is the 'mother of the Dartmoor rivers'. The East Dart, the Taw, the West Okement and the Tavy are all nurtured in its cradle and the East Okement rises very near it. The West Okement is, however, the only river into which the pool itself flows. The spot is intriguing on account of its remoteness and obscurity, which act as a challenge to the adventurous. It provides a sort of

puzzle: 'Given the moor, find Cranmere pool.' An improvised letter-box is fastened to a post on its banks, in which callers are expected to leave their cards to make good their claim that they have 'done' the moor and solved the riddle. The scene has a sort of weird impressiveness by reason of its solitariness and desolation, for it is shunned by even the wild ponies and cattle of the forest. 'In this stark wilderness,' Baring Gould declares, 'where neither the cry of the curlew nor the hum of an insect is ever heard, I have known a horse stand still and sweat with fear.' 'The only comfort it yields to the persevering traveller,' says Blackmore, 'is that he can never henceforth be in a more uncomfortable and uncanny spot.' The pool is said to be haunted by the uneasy spirit of Benjamin Gayer, a former mayor of Okehampton, who, for some unrecorded misdeed, was condemned to perform the discouraging task of emptying the pool with a sieve. The mayor was, however, an ingenious gentleman. He found one day a sheepskin—an article which he had possibly found useful before for emptying the pockets of the trustful. This he placed at the bottom of the sieve, and it answered his purpose so well that he soon had the water of the pool rolling down the Okement valley in a flood which devastated the town over whose fortunes he had once officially presided.

The northern front of the moor is its most impressive side, but its western flank is, as has already been said, also distinctly imposing. A good view of the north-western angle of the moor may be secured from Bratton Clovelly, some seven or eight miles to the west of Okehampton. Bratton Clovelly is perched on a ridge above a confluent of the Thrushel, and possesses a noble little church on the very top of the hill, exhibiting a curious extension of its south aisle. At Broadbury is the site of an almost obliterated encampment, which commands an extensive prospect, and some barrows.

The view of the north-western flank of the moor, which

the traveller beheld from Bratton Clovelly, he will see at closer range if he takes the road to Tavistock which skirts the moor. An old cross stands at the parting of the Tavistock and Launceston roads. Not far from the junction is the small village of Sourton, whose not very attractive name is derived from the sour nature of its soil. It is an exposed little place, with a small church, seated at the foot of its tor and surrounded by a bleak moor, in rambling over which the devil is said to have caught cold and died. He apparently was not used to the Devonshire climate and was possibly mislead by its reputation for warmth. Instead of lingering on the draughty platform of Sourton Common, the traveller should descend to Bridestowe (Brid-es-tow), in the valley of the Lew below, through which runs the road to Launceston. From Bridestowe the dominating feature of the Dartmoor landscape is Great Lynx Tor, distinguished by the snag of rock on its summit. Bridestowe enjoys a shelter which is denied to Sourton, for it lies on the banks of the river snugly enfolded at the bottom of the valley with its church in its midst. A large Norman arch (probably once a chancel arch) gives access to its churchyard, and there is a blocked Norman window in the south wall of the church itself. Only the base of its screen survives, and what has not vanished is varnished. A mile and a half to the south-west is Bidlake, a charming little Elizabethan home, characterized rather by medieval sobriety than Tudor ostentation. Almost opposite on the top of the hill, whose slopes are draped by the Burley woods, are the remains of a large entrenchment. The Launceston road below mounts over Lew Down, on which is a straggling village. To the north of Lew Down are Thrushelton and Stowford, both in picturesque situations overhanging the valley of the Thrushel. At the entrance to Stowford churchyard is an inscribed stone. At the west end of the church is an absurd monument of Christopher Harris (1718) and his wife. The gentleman is habited as a Roman warrior but wears a full bottom wig, and to further

show his own want of understanding the sculptor has fitted the couple with the legs of dwarfs. In the south chapel is another Harris monument with a medallion portrait and overhung, with similar affectation, by a tin helmet and some plaster gauntlets. The southern slope of Lew Down shelves down to the valley of the Lew in which, amid charming surroundings, is Lew Trenchard, for long the home of that prolific and versatile writer, the Rev. S. Baring Gould. Lew House, where he resided, the church where he ministered, and the little graveyard in which he is buried all lie close together. The church possesses a modern screen and carved pulpit, and some old stalls. At the end of a lane skirting Lew House is a mill and an old Dower House, whilst on the plot of greensward between them is a tall menhir. South of Lew Trenchard in an adjoining valley is Coryton. The village, what there is of it, is in one valley and the church on the slope of another, both in pretty situations. Near Coryton station the Lew flows into the Lyd. On a hill-top above their confluence is the lonely church of Marystow, whilst below, huddled at the mouth of a glen, is the village of Chillaton. Marystow Church has a Norman doorway, and a stoup and a fireplace in its porch. Within the church is a large monument bearing the effigy of an old man in armour, said to be a Wyse (1620). Near the tomb hang a corslet, helmet and an escutcheon. From Marystow the traveller can descend into the valley of the Lyd where, opposite the bridge which crosses the stream, standing in grey dignity is the fine old seventeenth-century gabled mansion of Sydenham, once the home of the Wyses. In the Civil War it was garrisoned by the Royalists but captured by Colonel Holborne. By crossing the bridge the traveller can proceed to the pleasant and extensive village of Lifton. A rustic described the situation of Lifton by saying, ' 'Tis up and, as you may say, 'tis down, and yet, in a manner of speaking, 'tis neither.' It really stands in a shallow basin on a hill-side above the valley of the Wolf. The village once entertained royalty,

for in 1644 Charles I slept at the rectory which was formerly the manor-house. Lifton Church has a good tower and handsome porch. It contains some seventeenth-century monuments and a brass. To the north of Lifton is Wortham, a fine fifteenth-century mansion of rather ecclesiastical appearance, with a double storied hall. Near it is Smalacombe, another old house. By following the road to Wortham through the hamlet of Cross Green, the traveller can reach Broadwood Widger, a small village perched high above the valley of the Wolf and commanding a fine prospect of Dartmoor. The church on the top of the hill contains a screen, some carved bench-ends, and a massive Norman font. In a cramped recess behind the altar in the south chapel is a sculptured altar tomb bearing the mutilated half of an effigy in plate armour of William Shilstone of Upcott, a small mansion, now a farm, about a mile to the west. In the churchyard is a Latin cross, said to have once stood in the neighbouring hamlet of Buddle.

To the north-west of Okehampton are some villages which can be included in a single ramble. They are Inwardleigh, North Lew, and Ashbury. Inwardleigh Church stands on a knoll near the road to Hatherleigh, and from its churchyard a striking view of the dark north buttresses of Dartmoor can be secured. North Lew lies to the west of Inwardleigh above the valley of another Lew, which flows past Hatherleigh and empties itself into the Torridge. North Lew is an attractive village ranged round a square with a pleasing church in one corner. In front of the church is a fine stepped cross with a modern shaft carrying the original head. Beneath it the devil is said to have been burned after the fatal chill which he caught on Sourton Moor. There is a pretty view down the Lew valley from the churchyard. The church has a Transition-Norman doorway and a fine collection of bench-ends. The original screen, which had been cut down to the transom, has now been reconstructed, and in the north aisle is an

especially fine roof. Ashbury Church stands in close proximity to Ashbury House, once the seat of the Woolcombes.

To the north of Okehampton are Exbourne and Jacobstow, standing on opposite sides of the Okement, which forms a pretty valley all the way from the town, and here courses over some sandstone rocks below a bridge. Exbourne, with its white cob cottages gathered round its church or on the top of a hill, presents a pleasing picture, and the church has a screen of rather unusual type. There is a large barrow in the neighbourhood and at Chittaford is a Tudor farm-house. Jacobstow Church is of less interest, but the village has a pretty aspect of rural simplicity. Opposite the church is a picturesque gabled farm-house.

CHAPTER XVII

THROUGH CENTRAL DEVON

The orchards gemmed with milk-white bloom,
The whispering woodlands' grateful gloom,
The tower whose fair proportions rise
'Mid the green trees to summer skies.

A. Irwin

FOR the majority of people Devonshire means its north or south coast, particularly the neighbourhood of Ilfracombe or the vicinity of Torquay. But Devonshire is a large land, and there is an extensive tract of territory, frequented by the angler but neglected by the ordinary tourist, which will repay exploration by any who can appreciate 'a calm and quiet scene'. This is central Devon, 'where a fair region round the traveller lies', though its beauty lurks in secret places. It has not perhaps the suave seductiveness and velvety luxuriance of the more familiar parts of the county, but it is not a commonplace country-side, and it is all the more alluring on account of its comparative privacy. It is for the most part a high plateau of more or less uniform level, but scored everywhere with valleys 'where rivulets dance their wayward round' and the rivers 'float on through the low land to the sea'.

In these constantly unfolding vales with 'blue hills beaming through each glade', lies its principal charm. The roads, as a rule, run in unadorned severity along the tops of the ridges where the villages congregate, relieved only by

The straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,

and they would be monotonous if they did not so constantly drop with unexpected abruptness into the glens.

They atone for their rigour by the wide prospects they unfold. ' Some hamlet brown and dim-discovered spire ' is generally in view, and in the distance is the sky-embracing rim of the moors. Frequently at one and the same time can be seen the Dartmoor tors, the uplands of Exmoor, and the Cornish hills. The Southern Railway follows the meanderings of the principal rivers through the heart of this green recess, and the traveller who wishes to get on some terms of intimacy with the region of central Devon cannot do better than pitch his tent from time to time at one of the little towns within reach of the railway, but upon whose retirement, however, the railway is careful not to intrude. He should make a beginning with Crediton, on the approach to which is Newton St. Cyres, a pretty array of thatched cottages lying in a dip of the Exeter road. The church, on a bank above, contains an undated monument with a striking statue of John Northcote. In the nave is a mahogany pulpit and sounding-board, and a boss in the roof of the porch is carved with a representation of a sow and her litter.

Crediton, if not a more ancient town, has at least an older title to fame than its neighbour Tiverton, and indeed claims to be of superior antiquity to even Exeter : ' Kirton was a market town when Exter was a vuzzy down.' Its title to veneration is twofold. It was both the birthplace of the celebrated Boniface and the seat of the Devon and Cornish bishopric from 909 to 1050, before its removal to Exeter. Boniface, whose name was Winfrith, was born in 680 and came of ' eorl kind '. He was educated at Exeter for the priesthood and became renowned for his labours amongst the Frisians. Eventually he became archbishop of Mainz, but was murdered in 755. In the Middle Ages, Crediton was notable for its manufacture of woollen yarn which became proverbial for its excellence. ' As fine as Kirton spinning ' was high praise. It was so fine in fact that it was said that 140 threads could be drawn through the eye of a tailor's needle. A little fighting took place

from time to time in the neighbourhood of Kirton. In the Western Counties' Rebellion of 1549, the rebels fortified themselves in the town by 'making a mighty rampiere'. Sir Peter and Sir Gavin Carew came from Exeter 'to have speeche with them', but exchanged blows instead. In 1664, Prince Maurice quartered himself on the inhabitants and his army was reviewed by Charles I. In the next year, however, Crediton was captured by Fairfax and Cromwell.

Crediton is a pleasant old-fashioned town on a ledge between the Creedy and the Yeo, and shelves down in one long street towards the valley of the latter. Like Tiverton it has suffered severely in the past from the ravages of fire. The church is a fine cathedral-like structure, almost at the bottom of the slope near the east entrance to the town. It is not, of course, the Saxon cathedral which Leland says occupied a site 'by the new churche yarde side'. He described 'the churche there nowe standing' as having 'no manner or token of antiquite'; nevertheless the fabric appears to date in part from the thirteenth century. It is a cruciform building with a central tower, aisles, an eastern lady chapel, and a vaulted south porch. It owes its dignity to the fact that it was a collegiate church with twelve canons and twelve vicars. At the Reformation the church was bought by the town for a hundred pounds, and the canons were replaced by governors. Adjoining the south aisle is the governor's room, a low three-storied building, occupying probably the site of the chapter-house. The tower is supported by Transition-Norman arches, and in the retro-choir are some Early English responds. In the sanctuary are a badly mutilated sedilia and an unusually large piscina with its original wooden shelf. In the north aisle is a finely carved fifteenth-century Flemish chest, and in the lady chapel is a double piscina. The church contains a number of monuments. On the north side of the sanctuary is an alabaster effigy of Sir William Peryam (1604), Chief Baron of the Exchequer and one of the judges

of Mary Queen of Scots. Near it is a ridiculous monument of John and Thomas Tuckfield (1635 and 1630) with an equally ridiculous epitaph :

> Why do I live in life a thrall,
> Of joy and all bereft ?
> Your wings have grown,
> To heaven you've flown ;
> Because I've none I'm left.

In the south aisle, near the retro-choir, are the recumbent effigies of Sir John de Sully (1387) and his wife, the former a Knight of the Garter who fought at Halidon Hill, Crecy, and Poictiers and died in his bed at the age of 105. On the west internal face of the tower some statuary has been placed as a memorial to General Sir Redvers Buller, who is buried in the graveyard. A house called the Palace to the north of the churchyard is said to stand on the site of an ancient episcopal residence, and on the west of the church is a picturesque row of cottages with Devonshire chimneys, behind which, in a narrow alley, is a spring issuing from an archway and known as St. Winfrid's Well. At the top of the town is a little green, now laid out as a public garden, marking the site of the old bull-ring. The stone to which the bull was tethered is still in the centre of the green. Behind the green is the Grammar School, and in a court beyond the green is an ancient chapel with some Early English lancets. It has recently been restored after many years' desecration. There is a public park on a slope to the north of the town, and some of the neighbouring hills command both pretty and extensive views of the surrounding country. Posbury Hill, two miles to the south-west, is noted amongst geologists for its display of gelepathic traps. On the summit of the hill are some traces of an entrenchment. The Crediton district once abounded in cider orchards, the produce of which was playfully said to find its way chiefly into the cellars of champagne importers or into the stew-pans of the manufacturers of

apricot jam. The orchards are not, however, kept up like they used to be.

There is opportunity for many quiet rambles through this verdant and diversified country-side which surrounds Crediton, and as usual there is plenty of climbing to be done. There are several villages scattered about the broken and hilly country through which the Creedy and its tributaries worm their way, but they are rather difficult to comprehend in a single ramble and are not of great interest. The nearest is Sandford, to the north of the town, standing on a hill above Creedy Park. The church in its centre has the rather unusual feature of a clerestory, and contains a collection of bench-ends, an interesting but obtrusive west gallery, and a brass to Mary Dowrish (1610). In the churchyard is a tall Latin cross. On a hill-side beyond Sandford is the old mansion of Dowrish, said to date originally from the thirteenth century, and still retaining a low, embattled gateway, and some of its old gables. It used to contain as a family heirloom a marble table in which were inlaid two hands of piquet once held by a Mr. Dowrish and one of the Northcotes. The former was so sure of winning the game that he staked the manor of Kennerleigh on the hazard and lost it. Between Poughill (Poyill) and Cheriton Fitzpayne, on a slope above a brook, is Upcott, an old manor-house, the scene in 1455 of the brutal murder of Judge Radford, a distinguished lawyer. Thomas Courtenay, the son of the Earl of Devon, with a band of men one night broke into the house, ransacked the premises, and compelled the old man to set out on foot 'to go to the Earl'. When Radford faltered through feebleness one of the ruffians 'smot hym in the head, fellid hym and kyt his throte'. Upton Hellions Church, on a hill-side above the valley of the Creedy, has a Norman doorway, a plain Norman chancel arch, and a mural monument of Robert Reynell (1561). Shobrooke Church, on the outskirts of Shobrooke Park, has likewise a Norman doorway. Thomas Westcote,

the topographer (1567–1649), was born and buried in the parish. At Stockleigh Pomeroy is a Norman doorway.

In the valley of the Yeo, on a ridge between it and the vale of its tributary the Cole, is Colebrook, the church of which contains a screen of unusual design, a fifteenth-century font cover, and a reading-deck carved with some uncouth figures. Below it, in the Cole valley and forming a pretty contrast with the village above, is the thatched and white-walled hamlet of Coleford. In a neighbouring glen at Wolmerstone is a holy well and some remnants of its chapel. On high ground, again to the north, is Copplestone, a brisk, modern-looking village on the road from Exeter to Barnstaple and Torrington. In its centre stands a massive granite pillar ornamented with interlaced work and showing on one of its faces an aperture like a niche. This imposing relic dates probably from the tenth century, and if it has not given rise to, at least gives point to, the old Devonshire couplet, which, though somewhat equivocal, is still repeated with becoming pride :

> Crocher, Crwys and Copplestone
> When the Conqueror came were all at home.

Conspicuously placed on a hill to the north of Copplestone is the church of Morchard Bishop. It has a stately tower, but the interior has undergone a little incongruous alteration, for the chancel has been transformed in accordance with eighteenth-century ecclesiastical ideas, and has at its entrance a two-decker pulpit surmounted with a canopy. The much-dilapidated screen has been transferred to the tower. In a recess in the south aisle is a pair of interesting sixteenth-century effigies supposed to represent Sir John Eyston and his wife.

The next convenient stopping-place is North Tawton. It must be confessed, however, that North Tawton is not a particularly lively town. It has an aspect of dull dejection, as if its expectations had never materialized. Like Crediton, it was once a manufacturing centre and was

celebrated for its serges and it still has a large woollen factory. In spite of its apparent stagnation, however, there is nothing enervating about the situation of North Tawton, for it stands well above its river valley, and the sightseer will find plenty to interest him in the vicinity, if not in the town. The town itself has little to show the visitor except a church, a market hall, and an alert-looking clock tower. The church has a thirteenth-century tower carrying a stunted slate spire and is a rather sombre edifice whose only noteworthy features are its roof and some Jacobean wainscoting. In the main street is a seventeenth-century house with a good bay window, and near the station is Cottles Barton, a picturesquely thatched Elizabethan house, with some oak-panelled rooms and plaster ceilings. Near the churchyard is a tall shaft of a cross, and there is another cross with a broken arm on a bank near a farm at Week in the valley just beyond the bridge. On a hill to the north of the town is an entrenchment. The road past Week leads to Sampford Courtenay, a village of whitewashed cottages mounting up to its church, on the top of a hill. Like Crediton, Sampford Courtenay had a share in the Devonshire rising of 1549. Indeed, the first and last scenes of the drama were enacted there. The inhabitants resented the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer and compelled the parish priest to revert to the Latin Mass. The neighbouring justices remonstrated with the ' aggrieved parishioners ' on their contumacy, and a certain ' franklin ' made it his business to argue the people out of their unreasonableness, but they liked his arguments no better than the book and demolished them by hewing him in pieces. On the eventual rout of the rebels at Clyst Heath, the remnant fell back on Sampford Courtenay, where they tried to make another stand. But though ' they did manfully abide the fight ', they were dispersed. The church is a large granite building with a stately tower and some differently fashioned arcades. It possesses a good roof, an eighteenth-century mahogany

pulpit, some fourteenth-century glass in a window in the north aisle, and a few fragments of its original screen re-embodied in a new screen in the south aisle. In the churchyard is a small cross on some crumbling steps, and there is another cross outside the village on the road to Honeychurch. Honeychurch is a hamlet standing high on the fringe of a common. It has a forlorn-looking little church which displays some thirteenth-century features. From the hill above the church a striking view of Dartmoor can be obtained.

The most attractive scenery in central Devon is to be found along the valley of the Taw, but its picturesque section does not commence until it unites with the Yeo. There are, however, one or two places on its banks in the vicinity of North Tawton which are worth visiting. Bondleigh, which stands high above the stream, is one. Its church has a Norman south doorway, some bench-ends, and, in the chancel, the effigy of a priest. Further up the river, on a ledge above it, is the solitary little church of Brushford, the top stage of whose tower has been replaced by a timber structure carrying a spirelet. The interior possesses a charming little screen and a Jacobean pulpit. Winkleigh, conspicuously situated on a hill-top to the west, has almost the aspect of a small country town, and Westcote describes it as once possessed of ' two castles, whose ruins yet show but are overgrown with trees '. There are no ruins at Winkleigh now, but there are some earthworks, which may be medieval, at each end of the ridge on which the village stands, both in private grounds. The church has been restored and ' garnished ' in recent years, and it is more ornate than interesting, but there is an ancient sculpture of Christ in glory over its south doorway.

The Taw is not the only river in reach of North Tawton. The Taw has for a tributary the Yeo—not the Yeo which flows past Crediton, but a more picturesque stream running for a while parallel with the Taw, and then joining it below Lapford. There are several villages in the neighbourhood

of the Yeo which are as conveniently reached from North Tawton as from anywhere else. Bow, to the east of the town, is a large village which has abandoned its parish church of Nymet Tracey and taken up a position on the Crediton road. The church, which stands between the village and the station, has a good screen with pierced spandrels, and a parclose. The chancel arch is awkwardly detached from the arcade and is supported on an octagonal column. To the north of Bow is Zeal Monachorum, overhanging the valley of the Yeo. Its church has a blocked tracery window over its south doorway, and a small sculptured panel on its north wall. In the graveyard a 'large dark yew tree' stands as 'guardian of its buried bones'. More picturesquely situated and more interesting is the church of Down St. Mary, perched on a hill-top above the Exeter and Torrington road, a little to the east of Zeal Monachorum. Its screen is said to have been fashioned out of the fragments of the original one. It has some carved bench-ends, and over its south doorway a rude sculpture of Daniel and the lions. In the churchyard is a Latin cross and the tall shaft of a later Calvary. On the opposite side of the Datch valley is Lapford, standing in a pretty situation above the Yeo, which here anticipates the beauties of the Taw. 'Meadows, groves, and river' combine to form a charming picture. Lapford Church exhibits a specially fine display of woodwork. The screen, the bench-ends, and the panelled roof are all of high merit. The Yeo valley separates Lapford from its neighbour Nymet Rowland. Nymet Rowland is on the top of a hill which forms a promontory between the Yeo and the Taw, and is very rural and primitive in aspect. It consists only of a few scattered farms and cottages, and has a small church with a wooden arcade. Near the church is a curious old barn. Nymet Rowland has, however, some claim to notoriety, for it was for long the benefice of Pass'n Radford, a man of immense strength, satirized as Parson Rambone in Blackmore's *Maid of Sher*. The queer folk, known as

the Devon Savages, also referred to in the *Maid of Sher* and who were possibly the 'Cobbledicks' of Baring Gould's *John Herring*, found in the seclusion of the village a congenial asylum and lived here for years in defiance of all sanitary laws, but were finally exterminated by an epidemic of typhoid fever. 'The last of them, an old man, lived in a barrel in an outhouse of a farm, but he set his straw on fire and was burnt to death.' Bleakly perched, as its name implies, on a neighbouring hill rising beyond another valley, is Coldridge. Its church rivals that of Lapford in the exuberance of its woodwork, which is even more striking, for it is unrestored and has the pallid tint of age. In addition to a beautiful screen, a parclose, a few old bench-ends, and some rich panelling above the rood-loft, it possesses a finely carved pulpit. In the north chapel is an effigy of John Evans, whose name appears on a desk near it, along with some old benches. He is described as 'parcardus', and is said to have been park-keeper to Henry VIII. In the east window of this chapel is a small figure in ancient glass believed to represent Edward V. There are a few old tiles in various parts of the church, and on the sill of a window in the south chapel is a small square piscina.

As the visitor has already seen the early beginnings of the Taw, he may as well have a look at the Yeo in its earlier phases. To do this he must journey to Spreyton. Nearly all the Devonshire villages have a pronounced partiality for fixing themselves in high places, but Spreyton stands especially high and prides itself on the circumstance. It is situated on the top of a hill which the traveller has to climb when he has crossed the infant Yeo. The Yeo is here merely a 'pebbly brook which murmurs with a dead yet tinkling sound' through a dingle. So considerable is the elevation of Spreyton that the villagers declare that in 'the steepled tract magnificent of hilly fields and meadows' which surround it, no less than thirty church-towers may be counted from the tower of its own church. The village

has an aspect of keen salubrity and is ranged round a green on which stands the whitening skeleton of an ancient tree. A hollow oak of huge girth also lingers in the avenue of limes which shade its churchyard path. The church has a good tower with a round-headed internal arch, near which hangs a fragmentary bay of the demolished chancel screen. The panelled roof of the south chapel has a long inscription on its beams to a former vicar, Henry Mayne, who erected it in 1451. To the south-east of Spreyton is Hittisleigh, which stands almost equally as high on the top of a hill above the deep valley of the other Yeo. It consists only of a few cottages. Its church has a rather bare interior, but has a good roof to its north aisle. If Hittisleigh makes no attempt to dispute the proud pre-eminence of Spreyton in the matter of altitude, it is because it has a distinction of its own with which it is content. It only misses being in the exact centre of Devon by a single foot. There is a precision about the statement which compels conviction. To the south of North Tawton is the fine old mansion of North Wyke, which retains the gatehouse and chapel of an earlier edifice.

One of North Tawton's comparatively near neighbours is Chumleigh, and to Chumleigh the visitor must migrate if he wishes to explore the prettiest section of the valley of the Taw. Chumleigh is an unpretentious and rather cramped little place situated in a most picturesque situation on a hill overlooking the valley of the Little Dart, one of the Taw's many tributaries. Charles I is said to have once passed a night at Chumleigh, and the room in which he slept bears the Stuart royal arms on a wall. The church, which has an imposing and handsome screen, stands on the very brink of the valley. It was once a collegiate church, and to the prebends which were attached to it a sentimental origin is assigned. It is said that a Countess of Devon one day met a peasant laden with a large and suspicious-looking basket going in the direction of the river. On her asking what it contained the man informed

her that it held a litter of seven ' whelps ' which he intended to consign to a watery grave. On looking into the basket, however, the lady found that the alleged puppies were seven infants whose simultaneous arrival had proved an embarrassing addition to the unhappy man's family. The countess, moved with compassion, took charge of them, had them all trained for the priesthood, and founded the seven prebends to provide for their future maintenance. It is hoped that they did not all prove to be ' dumb dogs '.

For the visitor the chief interest of Chumleigh lies in the attractive scenery which surrounds it. The Dart at its foot ' mines its channeled way ' through a deep and declivitously furrowed defile which opens into the green and tranquil valley of the Taw. The Taw, on the contrary, all the way from its union with the Yeo to Barnstaple, flows through a wide valley floored with pastures and walled with smooth copse-crowned slopes. It is to the Taw that the traveller will first turn for entertainment. Below Chumleigh the Taw is joined by the Mole, which comes gliding down a dark ravine near South Molton Road station. Up the Taw valley runs the road from Exeter to Barnstaple, but the villages are to be sought for on the high ground above. There is a string of villages on the western side of the valley, some of which will be found of interest. Eggesford (Egg-as-ford) Church, charmingly situated on the slope of the valley, has some pompous monuments of the Chichesters. The Chichesters first came into prominence and opulence through their activity in suppressing the rising of 1549, when the clappers of the bells, which had been rung to excite the people, were melted down and presented to Sir John Chichester to furnish him with a tongue to proclaim the principles of ' the glorious Reformation '. ' No question,' says Strype, ' he made good benefit thereof.' On a knoll in the park overlooking the river is an earthwork. Eggesford House, the seat of the Earls of Portsmouth, built in the reign of James I by the first Viscount Chichester, is now partly demolished. During

the Civil War it was garrisoned by the Cavaliers but was captured by the Roundheads in 1645. An earlier mansion stood near the church, but all traces of it have now disappeared. In a pretty section of the Taw valley near Colleton Mill is another seventeenth-century house, Colleton Barton, built in 1612, and said to be ' rich in old carving '. Burrington Church, on a hill to the north-west, has a remarkably fine screen. A still more conspicuously situated village is High Bickington, on the Okehampton and Barnstaple road, whose church contains a fine array of bench-ends and a pillar stoup. The most interesting church, however, in the district is that of Atherington (also on the Okehampton road), which is seen prominently perched on a hill overlooking a pretty glade in the Taw valley, near Umberleigh Station. The church tower is distinguished by a prominent turret. In the north aisle is a particularly fine screen exhibiting Renaissance details, with its rood loft intact, and there is a slighter screen of different design in the nave which has likewise a fine collection of bench-ends. On the floor in the north aisle is the mutilated effigy of a thirteenth-century knight, said to represent Sir William Champernowne. Between the chancel and the north chapel is a monument bearing the effigies of Sir Ralph Willington (1329) and his wife, and just below it is an altar tomb on which are the brasses of Sir John Barrett (1528) and his two wives. To the west of Atherington is Yarnscombe, likewise standing high. The church has a tower with an ugly stair turret on its north side, and contains an Easter sepulchre bearing at its back a diminutive representation of the Trinity. In the east window of the south chapel is a shield of arms of ancient glass, and there are a few old tiles on the floor. At Umberleigh the Taw valley expands into a wide and sheltered basin where the ' green and silent pastures ' are picturesquely hemmed in by ' sylvan nooks and bays '. Umberleigh was once the demesne of the Champernownes, upon whom it is said to have been bestowed by John of Gaunt :

I John of Gaunt, do give, do grant
To thee and thine, from me and mine,
The manor and fee of Umberleigh ;
And in token of my truth
Do seal it with my tooth,

which looks satisfactory if the tooth was not a false one. The Champernownes had a chantry here, from which, at its demolition, the Champernowne effigy in Atherington Church is said to have been removed. At the head of a combe on the opposite side of the vale is Chittlehampton. The village is built in spacious fashion round its parish pump, placed in the centre of a large square of which the churchyard forms one side. Chittlehampton Church is architecturally by far the finest church in the neighbourhood. It is a generously proportioned building with aisles and transepts, and has a splendid west tower, which must have been fashioned in Somerset so closely does it conform to the architectural traditions of the sister county. It has the elaborate Somerset crown, and the same exuberant display of pilaster-pinnacles on its buttresses. The towers of Chittlehampton, South Molton, and Bishops Nympton are popularly designated Beauty, Strength, and Length from their prevailing characteristics. The church itself is a stately edifice and worthy of its noble tower. It contains some fine roofs and a well-sculptured stone pulpit ornamented with figures. There are some seventeenth-century tombs with effigies of the Giffards, and on the chancel floor some brasses of the Cobleighs. Outside the village, on the South Molton road, is a cross on a high stepped base, and there is another cross on the way to Brightly, the ancient seat of the Giffards. The old mansion has been partly demolished and converted into a farm, and its park has passed under the plough, but the walls of its chapel are still standing and there are some traces of its moat.

The visit to Chittlehampton concludes the chief excursions in the neighbourhood of the Taw valley, but it does

not exhaust all that is to be seen in the vicinity of Chumleigh. There remain the regions of the Little Dart and the Mole to be viewed. On the opposite side of the Dart valley, and standing as high as Chumleigh itself, is Chawleigh. A pretty view of the vale is disclosed from the road which connects the two places, for it has to cross it diagonally for the sake of diminishing the gradient. Chawleigh is a large village with a roomy church in its midst, possessed of a good screen. From Chawleigh a road descends into the Dart valley and crosses the river to Cheldon, where there is a small church with some panelled bench-ends and a curiously-shaped font. Some eighteenth-century mace stands have been made into a chancel screen. The nearest village on the Mole is Kings Nympton, a village of carelessly but picturesquely grouped cottages standing on the hill above the river. The church has a low truncated spire like an extinguisher, a Norman south doorway, and a handsome screen exhibiting some variety of detail.

Another secluded urban retreat at which the visitor will have to tarry is Witheridge, which stands above the Little Dart on the road between Tiverton and South Molton. It is a pleasant and placid little place with an aspect of faded gentility. It was once governed by a portreve, but has long lost its former importance and has now sunk to the level of a village. Its church, near the little whitewashed square, shares in the general atmosphere of languid dejection, for it is externally a rather lifeless-looking building and its sculptured doorways have been badly disfigured. The tower was rebuilt in the sixteenth century, in a debased style, but its buttresses appear to rest on some large Norman capitals. On the south external wall is a scratch-dial. The interior contains a good arcade, a stone pulpit and a rather unusual Jacobean altar table. The district of Witheridge, however, preserves some remnants of prehistoric antiquity. On the north-west of the town, in a corner of a field near Horseford Farm, is a menhir, in some lanes on both sides of the highway to South Molton are

some tumuli, and on Witheridge moor, to the east, near another barrow, is the half-buried capstone of a cromlech, whilst there is a square entrenchment above the Dart to the north-west of the common. To the west of Witheridge, two miles down the valley of the Little Dart, are the adjacent villages of East and West Worlington. West Worlington clings to the side of the valley, but East Worlington stands a little above it. The church of the latter place is small and has been rebuilt but preserves a reconstructed Norman doorway. West Worlington is more interesting. It has a shingled slate spire, and its graveyard is entered by a lych-gate pierced through the walls of two adjoining cottages. The interior has a small screen and a few carved bench-ends. On the north wall of the sanctuary is a sculptured monument with the effigy of Sir Thomas Stucley (1663), whose brother was Cromwell's chaplain. An earlier member of the family was ' Lusty Stucley ', the Elizabethan adventurer who was said to have been a natural son of Henry VIII. He amused Elizabeth by his arrogance and ' blushed not to tell her to her face that he had rather be the monarch of a molehill than the subject of the highest sovereign in Christendom '. ' If you were a king what would you do ? ' she asked him banteringly. ' I should call you sister,' he replied significantly. His piratical conduct on the high seas led to his arrest, and on his release he engaged in the secret service of the King of Spain and was killed at the battle of Alcazar. There is a pleasant road from Worlington down the pretty valley of the Dart to Affeton (Affton) Castle, the ancient seat of the Stucleys, which once stood above the river. The castle itself has disappeared, but its turreted gatehouse has been rebuilt and looks over the woods which clothe the valley. On the Crediton road, in a field near the hamlet of Black Dog, is the fragmentary embankment of a circular earthwork, known as Berry Castle, now converted into a hedge. The site commands an impressive prospect of the Dartmoor hills from the Blackistone to Yes Tor.

A journey from Witheridge to Rackenford will serve to complete the visitor's acquaintance with the Little Dart. Below Bradford bridge, which he will cross *en route*, is Bradford Pond which must once have been a considerable lake. It is prettily surrounded by woods, but is now a reedy swamp in whose centre is a patch of water on the surface of which 'broad water lilies lie tremulously and starry river-buds glimmer'. In Castlefield, by the road-side beyond the bridge, are the remains of a circular earthwork with rounded corners. Rackenford, standing on a hill above the river, has a picturesque old inn and a church with a fairly good roof. In the parish is the old manor-house of Cruyshaye once the seat of the Sydenhams. The neighbouring hamlet of Creacombe, on the side of a dingle through which flows the Shercombe brook, once possessed an interesting church with a triangular Saxon doorway, but it was demolished and replaced by 'a neat Gothic structure' like a cemetery chapel. It preserves, however, the bowl of an early font.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EXMOOR BORDERLAND

How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that tops the neighbouring hill.

GOLDSMITH

THE borderland of Exmoor does not furnish quite so fine a field for exploration as the frontiers of Dartmoor. It is a much less extensive district, for it has only two sides, and its background does not display the same imposing contours or the same ' visionary majesty '. There are no ' scar'd jagged, black-corried peaks ' on the sky-line, no ' blue mountains ' nor ' dim tracts and vast, robed in lustrous gloom ', but ' dells where waters run ' and sheltered vales ' enfolding sunny spots of greenery '. Its beauty is of the pensive, ' spirit-healing ' kind which soothes rather than stimulates.

The fringe of Exmoor, like the skirts of Dartmoor, derives whatever charm it possesses from the rivers which drain the highlands and wander about the lowlands in their effort to find an outlet. Exmoor's supreme effort in the way of scenery is the romantic gorges of the Lyn rivers, but these belong rather to Exmoor itself than to its borderland, for the Lyn falls at once into the Bristol Channel. The Exe is again exceptional ; though it is as much *par excellence* the river of Exmoor as the Dart is of Dartmoor, its moorland surroundings lie wholly in Somerset, and its course through the borderland is short, for it flows directly southwards. The other torrents which traverse the outlying region, with the exception of the Bray, are rather

characterized by a pleasant pastoral sobriety than possessed of high romantic interest.

There is no better place for making acquaintance with the borderland of Exmoor than South Molton. South Molton, though not quite so obviously an Exmoor town as Bampton, is just as much a frontier station and has always been considered as belonging to the Exmoor country. Its environs still form ' a fair shelter for the sportive fawn ', and used to be regarded in bygone days as one of the favourite haunts of the red deer. In the thirteenth century its manor was held by William de Martyn on condition of his providing the Earl of Gloucester with a bowman and three arrows on his hunting expeditions. South Molton is a cheerful and roomy place on a hill between the valleys of the Mole and the Bray. It is not itself of great interest, though it is an ancient town and was a borough as early as 1301, but it has an atmosphere of rural leisureness which makes it an attractive sojourning place. In 1655 Charles II was proclaimed king in its market-place by Penruddock who was subsequently surprised and captured. It has a town hall and a stately church approached by an avenue of interlaced lime trees, and possessed of an imposing tower and a dignified interior.

Of the many peregrinations to be made in the vicinity of the town the most fascinating is the journey to Brayford up the Bray valley. Though South Molton obtains its name from the Mole, it is on its proximity to the Bray that it particularly prides itself. This is not surprising, for if little known to fame, the Bray is an exquisite river. It comes down from the Devonshire portion of Exmoor and traverses a lovely valley some three miles from the town.

To view the Bray the visitor must take the Lynton road, which drops into the Bray valley at Northland Cross, and threads it all the way to Brayford. It passes through a scene of sylvan beauty only comparable to that presented by the valleys of the Exe and the Barle. The vale winds

continuously and the culminating point in this succession of vistas is reached when the tower of Charles Church suddenly appears peering above the trees on the top of 'a fronting ridge'. On the opposite side of the river, equally elevated but out of sight, is High Bray Church. The traveller who wishes to see both churches, which are not, however, of great interest, can gratify his desire by ascending the hill to High Bray and crossing the river at Brayford. There is a pretty view from the ascent to Charles, of Brayford lying in the valley below. At High Bray Church there is a fragment of screenwork beneath the tower and a bench table running round the south external wall of the nave. Charles Church has been rebuilt but possesses a brass inscription to a former rector (1610). From Charles there is a road to West Buckland, likewise set on a hill. The churches both at West and East Buckland have been reconstructed, but the walk is worth taking, for from the latter there is a descent through a leafy combe to Filleigh, and from the long railway viaduct there, another beautiful view of the Bray valley is disclosed. The river here flows through the glades of Castle Hill Park, the demesne of the Fortescues, whose large yellow mansion is seated in charming surroundings whose beauty it has been thought necessary to enhance by some artificial erections. Filleigh church in the park has been rebuilt but preserves two small brasses of Richard Fortescue (1570).

There is another excursion from South Molton which will not only again give the traveller a passing view of the Bray, but will enable him also to see something of the Mole. This journey is along the Exeter road as far as Clapworthy, where it descends into the valley of the Bray. The valley has still much of the wooded beauty of its higher reaches, but not quite the same seclusion. The river has here almost run its course, for it soon unites with the Mole to flow towards the Taw. The Exeter road follows the course of the river, but on the high ground above the bridge are the villages of Warkleigh and Satterleigh. Both churches

are in farm-yards and have something unusual about them. Warkleigh possesses the unique curiosity of a wooden tabernacle, and Satterleigh Church exhibits a timber belfry, a fine bit of panelling above its demolished rood loft, and is provided with hat racks above its three-sided altar rails. Below Satterleigh the Bray unites the Mole, a much more commonplace stream, to which it relinquishes its beautiful valley. Lying on the banks of the Mole, above the confluence, is Nympton St. George, flaunting our national emblem as its weather-vane. At the prettily situated hamlet of Alswear, the Mole has a romantic mood and turning northwards splits into a number of ramifications. Bleakly perched on the top of a ridge commanding a fine prospect of the wavy outline of 'the wide, mountain waste' of Exmoor are the small villages of Mariansleigh and Rose Ash. Mariansleigh advertises itself by the shining white tower of its church, and preserves a few fragments of its old glass. Rose Ash Church has some woodwork and a piscina on the splay of one of its windows. On a slope on the opposite side of the valley is Bishop's Nympton, where there is a picturesque street of cottages and a church with a lofty and graceful tower. At Bish Mill the wayfarer will cross the Yeo and meet the Mole again at the ascent to South Molton. Little is to be gained by exploring further the valley of the Mole, which was at one time much exploited for copper, but there is a pretty glen near South Molton Station threaded by one of its tributaries leading to North Molton which, like its southern namesake, stands high above the river. It is a large village of almost urban aspect. It possesses an interesting church and an adjoining mansion. The church has a good screen with parcloses, a carved pulpit with canopied niches, but its most extraordinary feature is the pinnacled Jacobean panelling round the chancel, fashioned like a sideboard, which gives the chancel the appearance of a dining-room. In the south chapel is an elaborate monument of Sir Amyas Bamfylde (1626), with the figure of his bereaved lady

seated by the side of his effigy. Court Hall, the seat of the Bamfyldes, is in a neighbouring park.

More pleasing than the valley of the Mole is that of the Yeo, which forms the avenue by which the Great Western line reaches South Molton. There is nothing romantic about its scenery, for it is a broad pastoral vale into which some pretty wooded combes open and is dotted with hamlets, but as ' it widens to the contemplative eye ' it unfolds a vision of that

> Sweet interchange of all that charms
> In groves, meads, dingles, rivulets and farms,

which never fails to yield a pleasurable feeling of aesthetic satisfaction. Prettily placed at the head of one of its sylvan glens is Molland, an irregular village gathered at the foot of its church on the hill-side. The church retains its old-fashioned furniture, amongst which is a Jacobean pulpit with a large sounding-board, a slender screen across the chancel, and a Jacobean screen to the tower. On one of the piers of the arcade is a niched figure. In the north aisle and sanctuary are some mural monuments, to one of which is attached a double heart-stone inscribed with the Courtenay arms. West Molland, the ancient seat of the Courtenays, but now a farm, is at the end of a lane, a mile to the west of the church, whilst near the entrance to the lane is Champston House, once the residence of the Champeaux. To the north-west of Molland is Twitchen, tucked away likewise in a cleft on a hill-side at the head of another long, wooded glen. Its small church has been reconstructed, but preserves its rather quaint tower.

Amongst the hills on the southern side of the Yeo valley is Knowstone, a primitive-looking village on a slope overlooking a wooded dingle but surrounded by moors. Its church has a tall but unadorned tower and a plain Norman doorway. Its makeshift pulpit looks as if it had been manufactured out of a few remnants of its screen. Knowstone is notable as the birthplace in 1635 of Sir John Berry,

the naval commander who defeated the Dutch in Sole Bay in 1672. Blackmore used the Rev. John Froude, a former vicar, as model for his repulsive portrait of ' Pass'n ' Chown in the *Maid of Sker*. Froude is said to have kept a gang of desperadoes in his pay by whose outrages he avenged himself on people who offended him. He died in a fit of impotent rage at his inability to punish a man whom he suspected of having removed a shrub in front of his window. On Beaple Hill, a tract of moorland behind Knowstone, is a menhir which is said to have been thrown by the devil from Dartmoor to Exmoor, but to have fallen short of its mark and to have ' pitched ' here.

Higher up the valley, on its northern flanks, are West and East Anstey, above which stretches a wild expanse of common land, the real skirts of the moor. West Anstey, like Molland, stands at the top of a timbered combe. Its church has a rough round-headed internal doorway, a few good bench-ends, and an early Norman font. East Anstey Church, which stands on the extreme verge of the county, has no windows on its north side and a Norman doorway in its porch.

CHAPTER XIX

BARNSTAPLE

Chief of our northern streams, majestic Taw!
From thy clear fount on Dartmoor's rocky steep,
Where ancient legend marks the Druid's grave,
Thy limpid course is through sequestered vales,
And meadows broad, and glens and sloping woods.

BARNSTAPLE, though not a large town, may nevertheless be regarded as the capital of North Devon. Its situation alone gives it a certain importance and prominence, for it is the centre from which the lines of communication radiate to the coast. In many respects its position is analogous to that of Exeter, for each is an inland town standing on a considerable estuary, and each is a seaport as well as an agricultural mart. Like that of Exeter, the origin of Barnstaple must be sought for in Celtic times, for Leland states that its ancient name was Abertaw. Athelstan, who replaced the walls of Exeter, repaired those of Barnstaple. It changed its name with its rise to commercial importance as the staple of the district of Barum, and is still colloquially known itself as Barum. It is a pleasant if not very imposing town, and its surroundings are particularly picturesque. 'Girt by its theatre of hills' amongst which the Taw comes 'brimming bright and large' to where the sands begin 'to dam his streams and split his currents', it forms a not unpleasing addition to the landscape. Though an old town, there is now nothing antique in its appearance; it has got rid of most of its historic features. Its strategic position led to its early fortification. It not only had a castle but walled itself so well that its defences aroused the apprehension of the ruling powers, and in 1228 the sheriff of Devon was ordered to

reduce them to a height of ten feet. Time eventually dismantled them altogether, for in Leland's time 'the walls were nigh clene faullen' and its castle was a ruin. Of this castle, which belonged to Lord Audley, nothing now remains but a huge mound opposite the station. The last fragment of the fortress fell in 1605 killing some ravens which perched within its ruins—'merely that and nothing more. Quoth the raven, "Nevermore".' Barnstaple during the Armada scare contributed five ships to the English fleet, and later on sent out a number of privateers to scour the Spanish Main, which returned with a Spanish prize laden with chests of gold. During the plague of 1590 Barnstaple deputized for Exeter as the assize town, and in its zeal hanged eighteen prisoners on the castle green. In the Civil War the town, which Lord Clarendon described as 'the most miraculously fortified place he had ever seen', declared for Parliament. It was captured by Prince Maurice in 1643, but the townsfolk rose and ejected the Royalist garrison. During Barnstaple's occupation by the royal forces, Prince Charles was sent to it for safety, and, as Clarendon spitefully complains, relieved the tedium of his inactivity by 'giving himself his usual license in drinking'. Barnstaple owed much of its former commercial prosperity to the Huguenot refugees, who settled in the town in large numbers. Samuel Pepys in 1655, when twenty-three, married one of them, a girl of fifteen, who led him a lively life with her not unnatural fits of jealousy. As she brought her husband no fortune but her face, and as Pepys was dependent at the time upon the bounty of Lord Sandwich, the young couple were put to some shifts to make two ends meet. In his more prosperous days Pepys records how he would 'lay long in bed talking with my poor wife how she used to make coal fires and wash my foul clothes with her own hands, poor wretch, in one little room at Lord Sandwich's'. On one occasion the 'poor wretch', instead of lying talking, came to his bedside at one o'clock in the morning and, drawing aside the curtains,

' with the tongs red hot at the ends made at me as if she did design to pinch me with them '.

Though Barnstaple was gushingly described by Lady Fanshawe, who had been regaled on its ' mazzards ' and cream, as ' one of the finest towns in England ', it is not architecturally a very imposing place. It has a large church with a twisted spire and a number of monuments with kneeling figures of various local worthies. An old chapel, the history of which is rather obscure, adjoins the churchyard on the east. In another part of the town is a modern church with a fine tower, and facing the old but now disused quay is an ornamented colonnade surmounted by a statue of Queen Anne, built originally as an exchange, but now used as a Masonic Hall. The modern Guildhall has a good collection of portraits, some of which are by Reynolds and his contemporaries, and some interesting municipal regalia. The finest feature of the town is its long, medieval bridge which spans the broad expanse of the Taw estuary, but which is rather spoilt by its iron railings and the proximity of a distressingly ugly railway bridge. Leland states that the town bridge was originally built by a London merchant named Stowford, who was moved to the pious enterprise by witnessing a woman overtaken by the tide whilst endeavouring to cross the sands. Full advantage has been taken of the picture presented by ' the ever youthful waters ' of the Taw ' winding through the pomp of cultivated nature ', by turning its banks into a park and promenade. Besides its parish church Barnstaple once had a priory founded by Judhael of Totnes and dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, but its site has now been forgotten. On the slope of Fort Hill, to the east of the town, are some traces of earthworks which may have been the fortifications which aroused the admiration of Clarendon. Amongst the local industries are some art pottery works which specialize in ' Barum ware '. The surrounding district was once famous for its cherry orchards. Barnstaple's great occasion is its annual fair on September 19th,

which is attended by some curious customs. At its opening the mayor and corporation meet in the council chamber to discuss, not business, but toast and mulled ale, and a stag was at one time subsequently hunted on Exmoor. John Gay, the poet and dramatist, was born at Barnstaple in 1688, and Bishop Jewel, his antagonist Harding, as well as Gay, were educated at its Grammar School. Gay began life as a silk mercer in London, but ' wearying of the restraints and servility of his occupation ' he took to literature. His most famous work, ' The Beggars' Opera ', was produced by Rich in 1728 and its success is said to have made Rich gay and Gay rich. But though he had Luck for his schoolmaster, luck did not always attend him, for he lost his money in the South Sea Bubble. Barnstaple has a suburb at each end—Pilton and Newport. Pilton is separated from the town by the estuary of the Yeo and has an ancient priory church. The latter is a large building surrounded by some almshouses, and its tower, which stands at the east end of the north aisle, contains one of the largest bells in the county. The arcade is rude, but there is a good screen and parclose and an interesting font cover and canopy. The stone pulpit has a sounding-board and an hour-glass supported by an iron arm. In the sanctuary is the tomb of Sir Robert Chichester (1627), and in the south aisle is a Renaissance tomb (1498) and an Elizabethan altar table.

One of the pleasantest rambles in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple is up the river to Bishop's Tawton. It is a fairly large village at the foot of a rounded hill commanding a fine view of the neighbourhood. The church has a tower on its north side with a crocketed spire, and retains three bays of its screen ; adjoining the churchyard is a farm embodying the turrets of an old episcopal palace alienated by Bishop Voysey in 1550. On the opposite side of the river rising from ' some groves of lofty stature ' which ' the vale unfolds ' is Tawstock Church, but to reach it the traveller will have to proceed higher up the river and cross

it at Newbridge. Besides having a picturesque situation Tawstock Church has several interesting features. It is a cruciform building with a central tower. The woodwork is especially noticeable. There is a screen to the nave and a much richer one to the south aisle. In the north transept is a carved ringers' gallery, and there are some bench-ends, a curiously wrought squire's pew, and a fourteenth-century font cover. The pulpit has an arm holding an hour-glass. There are a number of prominent monuments of the Bourchier-Wrey family, and an interesting wooden recumbent effigy of a lady. Just above the church is the Bourchier mansion, a pseudo-Gothic building erected in 1787. The large gatehouse of the original mansion, erected in 1574, and which Fairfax occupied in 1646, still stands in imposing isolation on the south side. The village of Tawstock, or rather part of it, is picturesquely clustered in the fine park behind the house, and on the summit of a neighbouring hill is a watch tower.

Though Barnstaple is a port, it has no claim to be regarded as a seaside place. It contrives, however, to borrow a certain marine complexion from its proximity to Braunton, which gives its name to a tumultuous tract of sand-dunes skirting the shores of Barnstaple Bay. A good view of the Taw estuary, with

> The long mountains ending in a coast
> Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
> The phantom circle of a moaning sea

can be secured from Heanton Pauncefoot Church, which stands on a hill behind the Braunton road. Braunton and the adjoining village of Wrafton lie in the valley below. Braunton is backed by hills and is becoming a residential district, though the village, in spite of its pretty situation, is not particularly prepossessing. It possesses, however, a rather unusual church, with a massive thirteenth-century tower on its south side, crowned by a leaden spire. The nave of the same age is of exceptional width and is not in line with

its chancel, which has a fifteenth-century chapel on its south side possessing a good roof, which exhibits on one of its panels a sow with a litter of pigs. There are a large number of carved bench-ends, a screen, and a Jacobean organ gallery. On the wall of the south chapel is a small palimpsest brass of Lady Elizabeth Bowcer (1548). On the summit of a hill to the north-east is a ruined chapel, popularly supposed to be the remains of St. Brannoc's oratory. It is said that he was divinely directed to build a chapel where he first met a sow and her litter. Brannoc is vaguely said to have been 'the king's son from Calabria', but the legend suggests that he is rather to be identified with 'St. Brynach the Irishman', and that he made it his first business on settling in Devon to find 'a gintleman to pay the rint'. Leland says that in his time Brannoc's 'cow, staff, oak, and servant Abel' were 'lively represented in a window' in Braunton Church. On a neighbouring hill is a dilapidated tower, said to have been erected as a memorial of the Crimean War. A wide tract of meadowland intervenes between the village and the burrows, which have a lighthouse and another ruined chapel at their southern extremity. On the seaward side of the burrows are the Saunton Sands, Barnstaple's seaside rendezvous, a firm flat expanse around which a bungalow town with a golf course has sprung up. A road commanding a fine view of Hartland Point and Lundy winds round the adjacent promontory to Croyde, where there is a small bay overhung by Baggy Point and backed by another billowy waste of sand-dunes. Croyde is a long village stretching up a combe, at the head of which on a hill is Georgeham, whose church possesses a small classical screen, a cross-legged effigy of Sir Mauger St. Aubyn (1294), and a monument with painted medallions. Marwood Church, which can be reached by a long climb over the intervening hills, and stands on a platform overlooking a pretty glen, has the remnants of a remarkable screen retaining the back of its rood loft, and some carved bench-ends.

By taking the Combe Martin road through Sherwell the visitor can see something of the Yeo, a small but exceedingly attractive river of whose beauties its slimy estuary gives little indication. The great part of the village stands high near a belt of trees at the entrance of Youlston Park. The church lies on lower ground to the east. Its tower is at the east end of the south aisle and the north transept arch is partly supported on a square timber pier. In a recess in the chancel is the effigy of a lady, supposed to represent Blanche St. Leger (1483). Beyond Sherwell the traveller can get into contact with the river. On a hill-side on the west of the stream where it flows through a park-like glade is East Down Church, with its village picturesquely trailing down the hill to the vale. The church, which adjoins the mansion of the Pines, has, with the exception of its tower, been rebuilt, but it retains its screen and possesses a curiously wrought metal lectern. On the opposite side of the valley are Arlington Court and Church. Arlington Church has also been rebuilt, but in a recess on the north of the chancel is the thirteenth-century effigy of a lady said to be a Raleigh. From Arlington the traveller should make his way to Loxhore Church, standing in a farm-yard on a hill above the Yeo. Its north arcade has some timber piers similar to the one at Sherwell. In the chancel and north aisle are some small seventeenth-century brasses. Topping some neighbouring ridges are Bratton Fleming and Stoke Rivers, and below, in a delightful situation overlooking the river, is the hamlet of Loxhore Cot, whence a road descends the richly embroidered valley to Barnstaple. At Chelfham a lofty viaduct spans the mouth of a converging valley and adds a fresh feature to a scene whose already 'sweet variety herself doth throw to every bank'.

An interesting ramble can be taken along the South Molton road which will give the visitor an opportunity of completing his impressions of the Exmoor border. Three miles to the east of the town is the village of Landkey,

a lanky place indeed, for it stretches for a considerable distance along the road. The church stands amongst some cottages a little to the south. It has some thirteenth-century effigies said to represent members of the Beaupell family, and a monument of Arthur Acland (1610). The road after leaving Landkey drops down into a deep valley, at the bottom of which is Swimbridge, prettily clustered around its church and presenting a striking picture. The church has an Early English tower with a broach spire, and is remarkable for its magnificent screen, which is beautifully executed and is one of the finest in the county. The stone pulpit is likewise elaborately carved and carries figures. The font is enclosed in a wooden case and is surmounted by a carved canopy. There are a few old bench-ends and the roof above the rood loft is richly decorated. In the chancel, which retains its sedilia and piscina, is a mural monument with a painted portrait and a small brass on the floor. The Reverend Jack Russell, the famous Devonshire sportsman, without whose presence no meet was ever considered complete, was for forty-eight years vicar of Swimbridge. It is said that on one occasion his reverence was donning his ' pink ' when his man rushed up to him in alarm and announced that the bishop was just coming up the drive. Jack promptly dived between the bedclothes and bade his man inform the bishop that he was indisposed. The man did as ordered, but returned with the message that his lordship asked leave to come upstairs and see the invalid. ' Oh, tell him,' replied the parson, ' that I have got the scarlet fever.' On another occasion he was invited to preach in the cathedral. At the conclusion of the service, the dean, it is alleged, said to him rudely, ' I did not think much of your sermon, Mr. Russell.' ' I dare say not,' replied the unabashed preacher, ' though it is generally considered one of Bishop Barrow's best.' It is said of Russell, however, that he was as ' acceptable ' in the pulpit as he was popular out of it. To hold the attention of his rustic congregation he must have taken many a leaf out of

Barrow's book. It is said that once when in want of a curate a tradesman inquired of the parish clerk, who had entered his shop at Barnstaple on an errand, 'Well, John, have the pass'n got a coorate yet ?' To which inquiry the parson's understudy replied, 'No ; master's a bit perticler. He wants a man who is horseydox.' 'And what may that be ?' the shopman asked. 'Oh, I do reckon he wants a feller as can fettle a hoss,' the clerk informed him. Though Swimbridge is not on Exmoor, there is something suggestive of Exmoor in its situation, and if the traveller pursues the road beyond the village in the direction of Filleigh he will see a bit of scenery which might belong to the moor, for the road mounts the side of a narrow defile which has a sterile abruptness much more in keeping with Exmoor than with the surrounding neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XX

EXMOOR

Around my love and me the brooding hills
Full of delicious murmurs, rise on high,
Closing upon this spot the summer fills,
And over which there rules the summer sky.
Behind us on the shore down there the sea
Roars roughly like a fierce pursuing hound ;
But all this hour is calm for her and me ;
And now another hill shuts out the sound.

O'SHAUGHNESSY

VERY little of the great northern moor belongs to Devon. The lion's share falls to Somerset. The boundary between the two counties is an erratic one, for it spoils the symmetry of the shire by depriving it of its north-eastern corner, and renders ' the crooked shire ' yet more crooked by making it overlap on to what seems naturally alien territory. An attempt to correct this eccentricity was made in 1894 by a proposal to extend the limits of Devonshire eastwards to include the parish of Exmoor, but ' the battle of the boundaries ' (as it was called) was as disappointing as it was decisive, and ended in the rout of the Devonshire claimants. The only consolation for his defeat remaining to the Devonian is the reflection that the strip of moorland which still adheres to the county is not only a characteristic bit of the moor, but is the region associated with the great Exmoor romance of *Lorna Doone*, a circumstance which has probably done more than anything else to confirm the public in their misapprehension that Exmoor is in Devonshire. It is very difficult to say how far the western limits of the moor extend, for they are extremely vague. In 1818, when the Crown parted with its share of Exmoor, the whole forest was

officially recorded as enclosing 80,000 acres. None of the technical Forest of Exmoor is in Devon, but the whole of the coastal region as far as Morte Point has many Exmoor characteristics, and at least it may be granted that as far as Combe Martin it is all real Exmoor country. This would include within, at any rate, the scenic boundaries of the moor, the Lynmouth and Lynton district, which is its gem. The eastern frontier of the county is at County Gate, only three miles east of the Foreland, and this meagre strip of moor is further reduced by a great bite four miles deep which Somerset takes out of its southern corner. A perambulation of the Devonshire section of Exmoor is therefore not a very considerable business.

Exmoor appears to have been a royal chase even before the Normans came and made it into a forest ; and a hunting ground it still remains, for it is the only natural haunt of the wild red deer in England. Like Dartmoor, Exmoor is an elevated tableland whose general height is not much less than that of Dartmoor, but its surface is more uniform and far less rugged, for the billowy swell of the moor rises (with the single exception of Dunkery Beacon) into no peaks, and on it no ' rocky summits frown '. But this artistic disadvantage is compensated for by the abruptness with which it rises immediately from the sea almost to its full altitude, a circumstance which makes its seaboard one of the grandest and most impressive spectacles in the west of England. Though furrowed by deep combes it is for the most part a rolling expanse of grass and bracken unrelieved, except on its outskirts, by heather, and, like Dartmoor, here and there reclaimed by cultivation. On the Devonshire side of the boundary, the actual moorland only occurs in patches, most of which are of no great extent. Whatever may be the officially recognized boundaries of Exmoor, for the ordinary tourist at any rate, Exmoor symbolizes the neighbourhood of Lynton and Lynmouth. Of all the beauty spots in Devonshire, with the exception of Clovelly, none has received more unrestrained and unqualified

praise than this particular region. Southey, who visited it, was one of the first to set its fame circulating. 'The finest spot, except Cintra and Arrabida, that I ever saw,' he emphatically declared. Southey's enthusiasm has been contagious. Everybody has caught it. When North Devon is mentioned people's minds instantly revert to Lynton and Lynmouth. No one, on pleasure bent, ever goes to Devon without making an effort to visit them, and no one who visited them ever came away disappointed. To some extent, no doubt, they owe their vogue to their renown. People extol what they are expected to admire for fear of being suspected of a lack of artistic appreciation. But the unanimity with which the beauty of the district has been acclaimed is its mead. It is not easy to exaggerate its merits, for it has character as well as beauty. There is nothing quite like it elsewhere, even 'in glorious Devon'. Lynton and Lynmouth owe their pre-eminence (if pre-eminence be allowed them) to the fact that they pool their resources. They are not merely neighbours, they are partners and are always mentioned in the same breath. Together they present a combination of attractions which is as rare as it is enchanting—majestic cliff scenery as gracious as it is grand, romantic river gorges, wild moorland surroundings and a fantastic bit of rock-work which might have been borrowed from Dartmoor. Southey's frequently reproduced pen-and-ink sketch gives a good idea of the scene at Lynmouth. 'Two rivers join at Lynmouth. Each of these flows down a combe, rolling over huge stones like a long waterfall. Immediately at their junction they enter the sea, and the rivers and the sea make but one sound of uproar. Of these combes the one is richly wooded, the other runs between two high, bare, and stony hills. From the hill between the two is a prospect most magnificent; on either hand combes, and the river before the little village—the beautiful little village. This alone would constitute a view beautiful enough to repay the weariness of a long journey, but to complete it there is the blue and

boundless sea.' To some extent both Lynton and Lynmouth have paid the penalty of their popularity; they have parted with the quaintness and simplicity which was once part of their charm. Southey's 'beautiful little village' is beautiful no longer, though the quay-side, with its sloping row of white cottages, is pretty enough and quite Devonian in character. From a retreat Lynmouth has become a rendezvous. It is a congested and motley mass of miscellaneous buildings crammed uncomfortably into the bottom of a ravine not intended for the accommodation of more than a few picturesque cottages, and whose sublimity is sadly impaired by this irreverent desecration. Yet when viewed from above with its ugliness mercifully screened by the foliage which envelops it, and with its 'chalets' sprinkled about the hill-side, it presents something of the Swiss appearance on which Southey comments. Lynton has suffered less than its romantically situated neighbour, not because it has been preserved from exploitation, but because its surroundings are less sensitive to intrusion, and it has been extended, as it was able to be, with some regard to the amenities of the situation. It stands immediately above its associate on a shelf which stretches back into a basin between two hills. A little tangle of crooked streets at its threshold still survives as a memorial of its more primitive days, but the modern town sits with more roomy comfort in the lap of the hills. So much are modern conveniences studied that the old partnership between Lynmouth and Lynton is now further cemented by a cliff railway connecting the two places.

Neither place has much history. The little there is between them clings to Lynmouth as the port and is not very exciting. Yet as a port it was held in very little estimation: the practical Devonshire folk disdained it on account of 'the unworthiness of its haven'. It was only when the herrings took a sudden fancy to frequent its harbour that they began to take notice of it. But its prosperity as a fishing station was short-lived, for, as

Westcote gravely complains, the herrings left the vicinity as abruptly as they came when they found that they had attracted the attention of the parson as well as of the fishermen. They were prepared for the hook, but they objected to the crook. Much to the disgust of the toilers the vicar proposed to tithe them, whereupon the sensitive and considerate fish retired, as they were ' unwilling to be a cause of parochial dissension '. Lynmouth has a little stone pier and a small esplanade. A picturesque watch tower, rather Flemish in appearance but in reality a modern antique, gives a touch of character to its harbour. Its maritime facilities are not, however, great, for the harbour is still difficult of approach and passengers have to be landed in boats. Lynton has a church of ancient foundation, but giving little evidence of its antiquity, for with the exception of the tower the fabric has been rebuilt ; but it preserves two sets of stocks, and an old font cover.

The artist will, however, find both in Lynmouth and Lynton the entertainment denied to the antiquary. To begin with Lynton. There is a fine walk girdling the cliff and commanding a magnificent seascape. This walk, which begins near the church, ends in what is Lynton's great pictorial attraction, the Valley of Rocks, which, however, can be more directly approached by a road through the town. Southey's pen may be again borrowed to describe the scene : ' Imagine a narrow vale between two ridges of hills somewhat steep : the southern hill turfed : the vale which runs from east to west, covered with huge stones and fragments of rock among the fern which fills it : the northern ridge completely bare, excoriated of all turf and all soil, the very bones and skeleton of the earth ; rock reclining upon rock, stone piled on stone, a huge terrific mass.' The valley certainly is a very striking bit of scenery for ' the rocks are

> Rudely heaped and rent
> As by a spirit turbulent ',

but it is more fantastic than beautiful. Its two outstanding features are the Castle Rock and the Devil's Cheesewing. The Castle Rock is a conical cliff overhanging the sea and surmounted by a mass of rock. It is imposing by its precipitousness, but its raggedness detracts greatly from its impressiveness. To gaze down its slippery slope from the summit is rather an eerie experience. ' Here I sat down,' continues Southey, ' a little level platform lay below me and then my eye fell upon the sea far far below. I never felt the sublimity of solitude before.' Henry James declares that the spectacle provided him with ' one of the charmed moments of English travel '. The Cheesewing is a detached pinnacle of rock rearing itself weirdly from the slope of the hill behind. A sort of cavern at its base was the habitation of Mother Meldrum in *Lorna Doone*. The Valley of Rocks is not the end but the beginning of this westward ramble, for the road through it leads to two of the most beautiful bits of coast scenery in the neighbourhood—Lee Bay and Wooda Bay. Nature here affects a subtle modulation from severity to serenity ; in place of ' shaggy rocks ' are sylvan coves. Standing below another lofty cliff crowned by a watch tower is Lee Abbey, once the residence of the Wychehalses family, but now expanded into a large hotel. The building, which looks down upon the tree-fringed retreat of Lee Bay, has a picturesque gatehouse and incorporates the original fabric. The tragical story usually associated with Duty Point is almost entirely fictitious. The family were not Flemish refugees but cloth merchants of Chudleigh who settled here in 1620. John Wychehalse squandered his fortune by reckless living in London, and so far from being a partisan of Monmouth he was instrumental in capturing Colonel Wade, the rebel, at Lynton after the fugitive's escape from the rout at Sedgemoor. His daughter is believed to have fallen from the cliffs which she roamed in crazy lamentation over her lost inheritance. More beautiful than Lee Bay is Wooda Bay beyond, where the sea laves the foot of a wooded and

exquisitely tinted amphitheatre. By still pursuing the road along the coast the traveller will come to a scene of different character but of almost as much beauty. This is Heddon's Mouth, where a stream rattles through a deep V-shaped gorge, thickly draped with foliage but ending seawards in bare, sleek slopes, and then spreads itself over a beach beneath an overhanging cliff. Perched in elevated isolation on the moors on either side of the glen are the little villages of Martinhoe and Trentishoe.

The fame of the district rests, however, chiefly on the beauty of the scenery around Lynmouth, and it is certainly not easy to exaggerate its loveliness. 'Well mayest thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye', for it is an extraordinary panorama of 'rocks and woods and mountain torrents' which is here presented. Poets and painters alike fail to convey that peculiar impression of sublimity which the 'visible scene with its solemn imagery' makes upon the mind of the beholder. But poets themselves are not always responsive to their surroundings. Shelley visited Lynmouth in 1812, but he did not employ himself in writing poetry but in penning political pamphlets which he enclosed in bottles and cast into the sea. This eccentric method of propaganda drew upon him the suspicions of the authorities, and a warrant was actually issued for his arrest. But he eluded the vigilance of the local custodians of the public safety by bribing a fisherman to convey him to South Wales.

The creators of all this gorgeous pageantry of sylvan splendours are the East and West Lyn. The two rivers, after coursing down their separate channels, mingle their waters just before they enter the sea, and it is before the romantic picture of their union that the spectator stands in amaze. Each cuts its way through a gorge, and what makes the scene so impressive is not only the rich embroidery of their banks but the depth of the ravines. The walls tower up on either side to a height of nearly a thousand feet. The projecting wedge of hill which splits the

valleys and commands the view which Southey so much admired is itself 850 feet in height. The West Lyn is the more turbulent and perhaps the grandest of the two torrents, for it comes foaming impetuously down amongst the boulders and falls 400 feet in half a mile ; but its more romantic course is short, and from the road above it, its reckless stampede is almost entirely obscured by the foliage which bursts everywhere from the wall of its prison, though there is a walk up the glen along its banks which is worth the fee exacted for the inspection of its beauties. The East Lyn is a more sedate stream and pursues a much longer and more leisurely course, but it has the same sylvan loveliness and the same lofty and sky-excluding walls. A road and two pathways confer on the traveller the freedom of the river, by following any one of which he can

> Breathe the odours of the glen
> Where round about him are enchanted things.

The beauties of the valley are considered to culminate at Watersmeet, some two and a half miles up the stream where the vale expands to enable the Lyn to effect a junction with the Combe Park Water. The scene is a little spoilt by its tea-houses, and to see it to the best advantage the visitor must climb the path by the side of its tributary, from which he can look down upon the mingling of the waters. He can shorten his journey by ascending the valley of the lesser river to Hillsford bridge, where the Farley and Hoar Oak Waters unite, and then, by mounting the hill to Brendon Church, he can rejoin the Lyn at Rockford. The only thing missed by abandoning the longer route round the loop of the river is the scene at Long Pool, where the river tumbles over some boulders and momentarily subsides into a rock-girt

> pool whose waters lie asleep
> Amid the trailing boughs turn'd water plants.

At Rockford the valley is still pretty, but it has lost much

of its early romantic distinction. Rockford intervenes between Brendon Church and its village, for the latter lies farther east and presses closely upon the borders of the county which is reached when the river rounds a corner at Malmesmead and receives the Badgeworthy (Badgery) Water. Malmesmead is a pretty group of farms and cottages lying in a triangular meadow-floored basin, but it is known to the public chiefly as the gateway of the Doone valley. Three miles of rough pathway, however, up the Badgeworthy valley separate it from the actual scene of Blackmore's romance. There is nothing photographically exact about Blackmore's picture of the neighbourhood. It is compounded of three distinct localities—the Badgeworthy valley, a water slide or a tributary stream, and the Doone valley itself. The Badgeworthy valley has supplied the chief features of the scene, for it is wild, picturesque, and romantic, the water slide is a pretty bickering burn, glissading down an incline, but the Doone valley is a tame and comparatively shallow cleft on the smooth slopes of which are a few overgrown hillocks, supposed to be the remnants of the dwellings of the Doones. The novelist let his fancy play as freely with the landscape as he did with the legend, and brings these successive scenes into one focus to make a sufficiently impressive background for his stirring and vivid romance. The real story is as commonplace and tame as the actual scene, for the Doones were only a band of squalid savages who managed to make a living by doing a little cattle-lifting and scared the neighbouring farmers by their violence and threats. Their remoteness enabled them to evade the arm of the law which in those days scarcely reached as far as Exmoor. It is said that Blackmore laid little store by his story, and was surprised at its extraordinary popularity.

The Badgeworthy water forms the boundary line between Devon and Somerset, and by retracing his steps, and crossing the bridge and then following the Lyn, the visitor can pay his homage to the genius of the novelist, for there

is a medallion of him on the walls of Oare church. The pilgrimage to Oare will take the traveller into Somerset, but he will find the detour necessary in any case, if he is to find his way back to Lynmouth by a different route. A road from Oare church crosses the Lyn and ascends a long hill-side to join the Porlock and Lynmouth road. The ascent commands a pretty view of Malmesmead and the cleft in the hills which indicates the course of the Badgeworthy valley. Near the juncture of the roads is County Gate, a wayside cottage beyond which the traveller will find himself again in Devon. To the right of the main road

> In a dell 'mid lawny hills
> Which the wild sea-murmur fills,

on the very verge of the county, is Glenthorne, and on the hill-top overlooking its approach is Oldbury, a circular entrenchment with double ramparts. From the high-road subsequently there is a track across the adjoining moorland to the lighthouse on the Foreland, the huge whale's-back promontory with a conical termination, so conspicuous in a Lynton seascape. By the side of the road at the top of the steep descent to Lynmouth is the little village of Countisbury, with its church on a slope above it, in which there is a small Jacobean screen. Overhanging the road beyond the church is a conical hill the summit of which has been converted into a cliff castle by a formidable rampart. From the hill, and indeed from the top of the road, a peep may be obtained into what from here appears to be the gloomy depths of the Lyn gorge.

As has already been said, not much of Devonshire's share of Exmoor is actual moorland. Cultivation has encroached upon the wilds and tamed them. Though there are several commons in the neighbourhood of Lynton, there are no great desolate expanses within the county boundary and only two considerable hills. Yet sufficient of the moor remains in its native state to give the visitor

an idea of the general character of Exmoor scenery. It can be sampled by a journey through Parracombe over Chapman Barrows to Challacombe. Parracombe lies in a deep hollow through which runs a stream. Built into the foundation of its bridge is an inscribed stone. The village has been provided with a modern church, but its ancient church still stands on the hill just above the station. It is only occasionally used and retains its old-fashioned furniture. By following a lane from the church, which crosses a new road, the visitor can make his way to Chapman Barrows. This is one of Devonshire's chief eminences on Exmoor and has been largely cultivated, but on its summit extends the wild waste of Challacombe Common, dotted over with barrows. There are some more barrows on Holwell hill to the west on the other side of an intervening valley, whilst to the south-east of the summit of Chapman Barrows, and midway between it and a conspicuous barrow on an adjoining ridge is the Longstone, a thin slab of slate, some eight feet high, standing in weird and elevated isolation against the sky-line. The county boundary here runs along the valley below, but subsequently climbs over the summit of Shoulsborough. By adhering to the track over the hill, the traveller can eventually join the Simonsbath road and make his way to Challacombe. Challacombe is a very modest village lying in a hollow on the banks of the infant Bray. Its church stands on a hill about a mile to the south-west. In front of Challacombe village rises the bulky mass of Shoulsborough, the other conspicuous eminence on Devonshire Exmoor. On its summit is an earthwork, supposed by some to be Roman. It takes the form of a rough square, with a double rampart on three sides, and a single entrance. At the north-east corner is a mound. It commands a very extensive view. The Somerset frontier, after running over the shoulders of Shoulsborough, skips across the summit of Span Head, a slightly higher ridge to the south, on which are several barrows, declared by Leland to be boundary marks: 'A place called the Spanne and the Tourres; for

there be hillokes of yeirth cast up of aincient tyme for Markes and Limites betwixt Somerset shire and Devonshir and here about is the Limes and Boundes of Exmoor Forest.'

By rejoining the Simonsbath road and turning westwards until he meets the Barnstaple and Lynton road, the traveller can retrace his steps to his base.

CHAPTER XXI

ILFRACOMBE

> Awfully beautiful art thou, O Sea !
> Viewed from the vantage of those giant rocks
> That vast in air lift their primeval blocks.
>
> AUBREY DE VERE

IN the more scornful sense of the word Ilfracombe is perhaps the most popular seaside resort in Devon. It owes this popularity to its accessible position on the shores of the Bristol Channel, which makes it the El Dorado of the South Wales tripper. Yet there is little about it calculated to appeal to 'the madding crowd'. It is naturally a retiring place retreating up a sheltered combe in a wall of precipitous cliffs ; hemmed in by these 'crag-built barriers of the barren deep' it has none of the usual attractions of the popular watering-place. It has no sea-front to speak of, no sands, no great display of palatial shops and no 'side-shows'. 'Give me a bit of Blackpool,' exclaimed a disappointed excursionist ; 'all that's in this place is outside it', which was a paradoxial way of asserting the undeniable fact that the attractions of Ilfracombe are in its surroundings rather than in itself. It has, it is true, a fine, if not very lengthy promenade, but one more remarkable for the boldness of its situation than for its appurtenances, and its pier is a mere landing stage at the mouth of its harbour, devoid of a pavilion or any of the customary accessories. Ilfracombe, however, forms a convenient climax to the delirious joys of a channel trip, and is unusual enough and large enough to furnish the voyagers with an opportunity for gratifying their curiosity and satisfying their appetites. In spite of its 'popularity' Ilfracombe has 'the lion's mark' of real distinction. As a health

CHAPEL ROCK, ILFRACOMBE

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resort and a holiday centre it stands in the same category as Lynmouth and Lynton. Its fine situation facing the Atlantic, its picturesque setting and its striking individuality cannot fail to make a favourable impression on the visitor who seeks his pleasure in 'the round ocean, the living air and the blue sky'. George Eliot, who came here with G. H. Lewis in 1856, wrote: 'We are enchanted with Ilfracombe. I really think it is the loveliest seaplace I ever saw, from the combination of fine rocky coast with exquisite inland scenery.' The local saying, 'You must come to Ilfracombe to live, but go elsewhere to die', is a testimony to its salubrity.

The harbour is a prominent and striking feature in an Ilfracombe picture, for it lies immediately under the cliffs, and overlooking it is a small knoll crowned by an ancient chapel bearing a lantern. The town climbs the combe behind the harbour, whilst the parade swings round a projecting and conical hill between the harbour and the small shingly beach of Wildersmouth above which the town heaps itself. The inevitable pavilion is on a level sward at the foot of the town behind the parade. The parish church stands in a picturesque position at the top of the town. It is a spacious fourteenth-century structure with a Norman tower rising in the centre of its north aisle. The historian Camden was once one of the lay prebendaries of its church, and Charles Kingsley was a frequent visitor at his brother-in-law's vicarage.

The walks about Ilfracombe are its great asset; those that follow the coast are exceptionally fine. One of them, the Tors Walk, has been turned into a second promenade, for it zigzags up the side of a cliff on the western side of Wildersmouth bay, Ilfracombe's apology for a sea-front, and the view of the channel, with Lundy occasionally appearing in the distance, obtainable from it, is very striking. Lundy is a sort of local weather glass, for

If Lundy's plain
There will be rain.

One of the most fascinating of the longer rambles is to take a steep lane near the parish church, which leads up behind the Tors Walk and climbs on to the top of the cliffs beyond. The path eventually descends to the secluded village of Lee, a very popular objective with Ilfracombe excursionists. Lee lies in a sequestered valley opening into a small landlocked bay, on to whichthe sea comes timidly creeping, and though rather spoilt by a large hotel, Lee manages to preserve much of its native retirement. The dingle is charmingly wooded and is threaded by a stream. The scene with its verdant surroundings seems entirely rural, until suddenly at the mouth of the glen

> The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
> The luminous home of waters opens, bright
> And tranquil.

A path leads across the mouth of the glen up the hill-side beyond to Morthoe, standing contrastingly in gusty prominence on the top of the downs, behind the sharply-projecting promontory of Morte Point, whose name bespeaks its sinister reputation, for

> Round it the mournful surges ring the dead seaman's knell.

There is, however, nothing very menacing in the appearance of Morte Point. It is a rugged but not very imposing headland and forms a rough but extensive platform from which ' nought but sea and heaven appear ', except, perhaps, Lundy in the distance. Off the point rising from the waves is the dreaded Morte Stone, which, it is said, no power on earth can move—a veritable rock of death which, according to popular superstition, ' God made last and the devil will take first '. Near the signalling station at the extremity of the Point is the capstone of a cromlech. Morte Point is unilluminated, but a lighthouse standing 154 feet above sea-level on the neighbouring headland of Bull Point, gives mariners the necessary warning of the dangers which beset them. The unadorned tower of

Morthoe Church is in keeping with its bleak surroundings. Under its shadow ' Lie the Tracys with the wind in their faces '. The church is said to have been built by William de Tracy, the bold Baron of Barnstaple, who was the leader of Becket's assassins. It has a thirteenth-century chancel and a fourteenth-century tower, but the rest of the fabric is of a later date. It possesses some fine bench ends, and there is a curious passage squint lighted by a window in the south transept which is occupied by an altar tomb bearing an incised effigy of a priest, William de Tracy, vicar (1322). Local tradition says that William de Tracy, Becket's murderer, in remorse spent his days in retirement at Morthoe in the hope of expiating his crime, and that this is his tomb. Here, however, he cannot rest, but spends his nights on Woolacombe sands, vainly endeavouring to weave the sands into a rope, and on stormy nights he may yet be heard howling dismally among the dunes. As a matter of fact, the penitence of the three assassins—all, by the way, West Country men—was like the penance of their master, merely ' eyewash '. A year after their temporary disgrace they were all back again at court with De Tracy in high favour. Nevertheless, a terrible fate did at length overtake him. Feeling himself a stricken man he surrendered himself to Pope Alexander III and set out on a pilgrimage to Palestine, but he died of a horrible disease at Cosenza in Sicily in 1173. From Morthoe a road runs down to Woolacombe and passes on its way the little inlet of Barricane Bay, floored almost entirely with broken shells. Woolacombe Bay lies at the foot of a long ridge and is bordered by a semicircular stretch of firm and almost level sand, three miles in length, on which even when ' the gentleness of heaven is on the sea ' the ' shoreward rolling, and triumphant waves ' curl playfully and show that

> The mighty being is awake
> And doth with his eternal motion make
> A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Half a century ago this

> World of waters heaped up on high
> Rolled like great mountains in wide wilderness,

for it was a desolate and deserted shore. To-day this shimmering desert has blossomed into a large and flourishing watering-place replete with hotels, boarding-houses, and serried ranks of bathing machines.

Another ramble quite as varied and enchanting runs from Ilfracombe along the shore in the opposite direction toward Lynton. At the outset the highway should be discarded for a path which leaves the town near the harbour and climbs a shady hill-side beneath some outlying terraces. A bypath descends to Rapparee Cove, a cliff-backed strand which provides visitors with a bathing-place. Another track leads to the top of Helesborough (or Hillsborough), a majestic and precipitous cliff rising starkly from the sea beyond the harbour. There are traces of prehistoric entrenchments on its landward slope, and its summit commands a magnificent view of the coast and harbour. At the modern village of Hele, which unhappily blocks the entrance to what was once a pretty and secluded cove, the path joins the Lynton road. Opposite Hele, a path leads up the Chambercombe valley, in which is an old manor-house of the Champernownes, now a farm. The Lynton road, however, clings to the coast, and after passing over the low spit of Widmouth Head and below the walls of Watermouth Castle—a pretentious Victorian structure with an affected air of feudal antiquity—skirts the small creek of Watermouth Bay. Beyond the creek is a pebbly beach giving access to some caves into which the waves come ' rolling their verdant gulfs of every hue '. Standing back from the road, in a wooded recess, is the village of Berry Narbor, an umbrageous retreat with its church picturesquely placed on the hill-side above the glen. The church has a good tower adorned with niches, and though chiefly Perpendicular gives some indications of an earlier

origin, for there is a plain Norman arch to its north transept and some lancets in its chancel. In the nave are some seventeenth-century mural monuments. The old manor-house of the Berrys, built in the reign of Edward IV, stands just below the church on the west side. It is small and has been woefully despoiled ; its porch has been removed and its ' properties ' dispersed. Bowden, a humbler abode about a mile up the valley, was the birthplace of Bishop Jewel. Hooker, who was his pupil, described Jewel as ' the worthiest divine (the brightest jewel in fact) whom Christendom has bred for some hundreds of years. He wrote learnedly, preached painfully, lived piously, and died peacefully.' His great work, the *Apology*, was published in 1562. Curiously enough, Harding, his Roman Catholic antagonist, with whom he carried on a vigorous controversy for some years, was a Combe Martin man. The path up the glen towards Bowden leads through the Sterridge valley, once a favourite resort for trippers. The Lynton road leaves Berry Narbor to its retirement, and, still skirting the shore, rounds a corner and enters the long, deep combe in which Combe Martin lies. At the mouth of the combe is a shelving beach of pebbles overhung by cliffs, above which the peaked summit of the Lesser Hangman and the bulky shoulders of the Greater Hangman protrude. The bluffs are popularly supposed to derive their name (which is probably of a Celtic origin) from the story that a sheep-stealer, to carry his burden more easily, tied the animal's legs together and threw it over his neck. Sitting down on a stone to rest he fell asleep and the captive's efforts to free itself strangled him. Around the mouth of the combe has now gathered an array of boarding-houses, whilst the village trails interminably up the defile. Around rise the russet slopes, ' precipitously steep ', so characteristic of the Exmoor country on the verge of which Combe Martin stands,

> And the Atlantic sends his pipers
> Up the thunder-throated glen,

O'er the moor at midnight sounding
Pibrochs never heard by men ;
Clouds and mists and rain before them
Crowding to the wild-wind tune,
Here to wage their all-night battle,
Unbeheld by stars and moon.

The village is scarcely picturesque enough to justify its inordinate length. It possesses, however, one fantastic erection—the ' King's Arms ', once known as the ' Pack of Cards ', possibly from its structural resemblance to a house of cards. The church stands at the upper end of the village and is an interesting building with a stately west tower, the buttresses of which have niched figures with grotesques above them. The interior possesses a good but maltreated screen and some ancient glass, a mural monument with a marble demi-figure of Judith Hancock (1637) and a brass of the arms of William Hancock (1587). The district was, in early times, a busy centre of the silver-lead mining industry. In the reign of Edward I, three hundred Derbyshire miners were brought into the district to work the ore, and so remunerative was the enterprise that both Edward III and Henry V are said by Camden to have largely defrayed the expenses of their French campaigns by the produce of the mines. Though the mines continued to be worked fitfully down to the middle of the last century they are now abandoned. The Corporation of London possess a cup made of Combe Martin silver and dated 1593. On Maddock's Down, to the south of Combe Martin, was once a stone circle, but now only a prostrate stone and two rude menhirs survive. In the little church of Bittadon, on the Barnstaple road, are some seventeenth-century monuments, whilst at West Down, a pleasant village on a ridge overlooking the valley running down to Braunton, is a picturesque farm-house dated 1669 and church containing a coloured effigy of Sir John Stowford (1372), a judge of Common Pleas.

CHAPTER XXII

BIDEFORD AND BEYOND

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
The clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city
Behind the dark church tower.

LONGFELLOW

THERE are not many districts in England which have two places having so many common characteristics and lying so closely together as Barnstaple and Bideford. Both are ancient towns and ports, both have noble rivers and fine bridges, and both are set amid similar surroundings. They are the twin brethren who presided jointly over the fortunes of the sea-rovers who sailed for the Spanish main from the sand-strewn bay into which their rivers flow. Yet in spite of their general resemblance, they have distinct characteristics, and it is difficult to say which makes the more favourable impression on the visitor. In one respect one is the reverse of the other. Barnstaple lies embedded in 'an irriguous valley' as a mere feature in a broad landscape, whilst Bideford boldly climbs a hill-side and is itself the most prominent object in a scene

Where a bold river breaks the long expanse
And woods along its banks are waving high.

Eminently picturesque though the situation of Bideford is, there is nothing particularly attractive in the town itself. Like its neighbour, it lacks architectural beauty, and its narrow streets are unredeemed by any touch of quaintness. By far its finest features are its many-arched bridge and its spacious tree-planted quay-side. These are, however, of themselves quite sufficient to confer upon it artistic

distinction, yet its fame rests probably more upon its literary associations than on its scenic merits, for it was at Bideford that Charles Kingsley penned part of his novel of *Westward Ho !* and in it he incorporates a little vignette of ' the little white town sloping upwards from its broad tide river '. Bideford has repaid the debt it owed to the man who made it famous by erecting to him a statue near the entrance to a pleasant little park and parade at the end of the quay. Some old cannon, supposed to have belonged to the Spanish Armada, are mounted in the park to keep alive the naval traditions of the port.

The bridge is Bideford's *chef d'œuvre*. It was erected in the fourteenth-century by Sir Theobald Grenville, and is ' the soul around which the town as a body has organized itself ' ; for Bideford is said to mean ' by the ford ', and the town naturally sprang up at the spot where facilities were provided for crossing the river. The picturesqueness of the structure is rather marred by the thickness of the piers and the inequality of the arches. On its construction, difficulties are said to have been experienced in finding for it a foundation, until the parish priest, Sir Richard Gourney, when lying on his bed, dreamt that a rock had been swept down from the hills and was lying in the bed of the river. At his direction on this rolling stone the fabric was reared. The other piers were placed on wool packs, and the bridge was accustomed in consequence to sway with the motion of the traffic. It need hardly be said that these tremors are no longer felt by the wayfarer, for fleecing is no longer resorted to for the support of bridges. Not only is the bridge itself old, but it connects the only two antiquities which the town can boast. Above it, at one end, is the church, and at the other is the Royal Hotel, but, like the bridge itself, both of these have now been modernized and no longer advertise their age. The church was rebuilt in 1865, and the hotel has smothered itself in a very commonplace envelope. The kernel of the hotel is the quadrangular mansion of John Davie, a local merchant prince,

and contains some panelled chambers and a fine staircase. The church possesses some portions of a stone screen, the effigy of Sir Thomas Grenville (1513), and a mural monument of John Strange (1664), who was mayor during a severe visitation of the Plague. James Hervey was curate of Bideford not long before he published his *Meditations Among the Tombs* in 1747. In the churchyard is the oft-quoted epitaph :

> Here lies the body of Mary Sexton,
> Who pleased many a man but never vext one,
> Not like the woman who lies under the next stone.

John Shebbeare (1709–88), the pamphleteer, who was pilloried for his political writings, was a native of Bideford. He was a surgeon who wielded the pen as cuttingly as the knife. He assailed Wilkes and defended the American policy of George III against the attacks of Burke. As a reward for his services he was granted a pension, a mark of royal favour which, as it happened to synchronize with that bestowed upon Dr. Johnson, made the Whigs complain that the King had taken into his keeping a He-bear and a She-bear.

On the top of the hill behind the Royal Hotel is Chudleigh Fort, a low, battlemented redoubt erected by Major-General Chudleigh, the Parliamentarian, at the commencement of the great rebellion, but eventually surrendered to the Royalists. It has now been turned into a public view-point and near it is the town's war memorial. The municipal buildings are near the opposite end of the bridge. By the side of the approach to the bridge from the station is a bust of J. R. Pine-Coffin, of Portledge (1893). One of his ancestors, Sir William Coffin, who took part in the pageantry of the Field of Cloth of Gold, justified his name by his action at a graveyard ' scene ' which brought him into conflict with the ecclesiastical courts. The parson was engaged in unseemly altercation with the relatives of an unburied corpse about the payment of a heriot, and

refused to proceed with the service until the dead man's cow, ' the last quick goods ', was surrendered. Sir William vainly remonstrated with the priest, and, losing his temper, ordered him to be thrown into the grave and the grave filled in unless he fulfilled his duty. It was only when ' the obstinate priest was altogether or well-nigh chok'd ' that he complied with the demand. The Grenvilles, whose family monument is in the church, owned the manor from the time of the Conquest, and it was Sir Richard's discovery of Virginia in 1585 which gave to Bideford its early maritime importance and his stirring single-handed exploit with the little *Revenge* at Flores in 1591 gave him a place in naval history. Froude says that it ' struck deeper terror into the heart of the Spanish people than even the destruction of the Armada '.

> Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain,
> Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain.

Chudleigh Fort is not the only fortification in the neighbourhood, for in private grounds to the west of the town is a tree-crowned mound known as Kenwith Castle, supposed to be the fort which the Danes assailed in 879.

Though the smell of the sea comes up with the tide to Bideford quay, Bideford looks inland across the river. ' To see the far-off sparkling brine ', one has to cross an intervening ridge to Westward Ho. Westward Ho is a Bideford marine annexe. It was created for the purpose of providing the town with a seaside playground, and was christened Westward Ho in ill-judged compliment to Charles Kingsley, for it adjoins Northam, the birthplace of Amyas Leigh and the burial-place of Salvation Yeo. Kingsley was horrified at the project. ' You will defile the pebble ridge,' he protested, ' with chicken bones and ham scraps.' Burrough House, the birthplace of Amyas Leigh, has been rebuilt. It was the home of Stephen and William Burrough, the Elizabethan navigators. Northam Church has a good

tower and an octagonal arcade, but lacks interest. Near it, on the north and surmounted by a flagstaff, is a mound nicknamed Bone Hill. A fine view can be obtained of ' the long low dunes and easy plunging sea ' which mark the entrance to the estuary of the Taw beyond the intervening stretch of ' ignoble ' sands and salt marshes, known as the Northam Burrows. The neighbourhood is traditionally associated with a little bit of early history, for the Danes are said to have effected a landing in 878 at the adjoining village of Appledore, when they attacked Kenwith Castle, but to have been driven back to their ships with great slaughter and the loss of their leader Hubba and their war-banner ' The Raven '. The fray is supposed to have taken place at an angle in the Appledore road marked by a railed-in stone and known as Bloody Corner, and the slain to have been buried at Bone Hill. To Appledore, distance lends some enchantment, but it has few attractions on closer inspection. It is a poor replica of Bideford with a few narrow streets climbing the hill-side behind a quay on which congregate a company of Jacobsian watermen who eye the unnautical visitor with ill-concealed disfavour and one another with mutual animosity. The church is a poor modern thing with, however, a good tower. There is another tower built as a ' folly ' on the brink of a yawning quarry. Along the western flank of the Northam Burrows extends the famous pebble ridge. It stretches for some two miles to Westward Ho, and is conjectured to be compacted of fragments wrenched from Hartland Point and rolled and piled up here by the channel currents. On the shore below the ridge is a submerged forest in which tree-trunks, the bones of animals, and even prehistoric flints have been found. Westward Ho is a long, straggling place hanging back shamefacedly against a hill-side from its flat and dreary shore. Its pier was pounded to pieces years ago, but the pebble ridge acts as a sea-wall for the protection of the golf links, for which it was famous when the game was seldom played on this side of

the Tweed. The school, originally built as Kingsley's memorial, has gone west, and its buildings, instead of being an instrument for the production of sharps, has itself been transformed into flats.

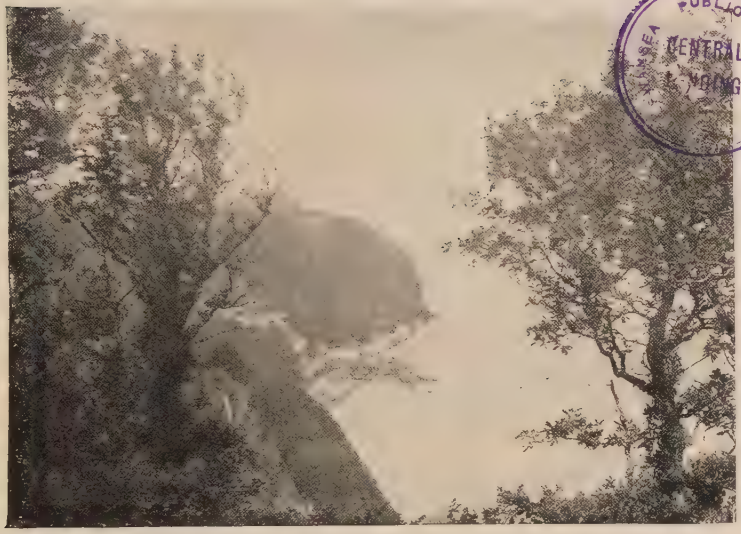
Some two miles or so to the south of Westward Ho and on higher ground is the village of Abbotsham, where there is a thirteenth-century aisless church with a tower on its south side. It has some carved bench-ends and a good roof. A much more interesting church is at Alwington, reached through the hamlet of Fairy Cross. Alwington Church has an imposing and boldly buttressed tower, remarkable for the amount of ' batter ' it exhibits, which gives it a pleasing touch of originality, but the chief glory of the building is its furniture. It has some good bench-ends, a finely carved canopied pulpit, and some Jacobean panelling, but especially noteworthy (it cannot help being noticeable) is the squire's pew at the east end of the south aisle, looking like a box at a theatre, and said to be constructed out of the buttery screen from the old mansion of Portledge. On the south wall are some seventeenth-century mural monuments of the Coffins, with medallions. The valley of the Yeo separates Alwington from Parkham, whose church stands out starkly on the hill above. Parkham Church has a Cornish tower, a good Norman doorway, some old tiles and some mural monuments of the Risdons, Giffards and Monks. Bableigh, now a farm standing by the side of the road to Buckland Brewer, was once the seat of the Risdons, and not very far away, to the north-east, is Halsbury, the ancestral home of the Giffards. Buckland Brewer also occupies a very elevated position and its church tower is a conspicuous landmark for miles round. Buckland Church, which was rebuilt after its destruction by lightning in 1399, has likewise a good Norman doorway, fitted with an old door with a richly ornamented lock. There is a sculptured but defaced doorway at the east end of the south aisle, and the chancel arch, like that of Nymet Tracey Church, is supported on a separate pier. In the

north chapel are mural monuments of Anthony Dennys (1641) and of John Davy (1710). Orleigh Court, the home of the Dennys, stands in a timbered park by the side of a tree-bordered stretch of road descending into the pretty valley of the Yeo. On a hill-side, on the opposite side of the vale, is Littleham, a scattered place with its church hidden in foliage. The church has an elaborate modern screen incorporating portions of its predecessor, and under glass in the west wall of the north transept is a fresco of St. Swithin. In the south aisle is a railed-in modern monument with effigy of General Crealock.

There are one or two villages on the east side of Bideford, which, though not of any great interest, will yet provide the visitor with an opportunity of seeing something of the elevated tract of country which extends between the Taw and the Torridge. At the hamlet of Eastleigh is a farm with some typical Devonshire chimneys. At Horwood there is a small church containing a few panelled bench-ends, an old coffer, a Jacobean pulpit, some old glass, and, on the sill of a window in the north aisle, an interesting effigy of a lady of the fifteenth century in a mitred head-dress and wrapped in a mantle enfolded in which are the figures of three children. In a niche in the porch is the effigy of a saint, but the horseshoe, which Michael Joseph, the Cornish blacksmith, defiantly nailed to the door of the church when his horse cast it as he passed the church gate on his way to disaster at Blackheath in 1497, has disappeared. On the slope of a valley, some two miles beyond Horewood, is Newton Tracy. Its small thirteenth-century church, at the bottom of the village, has a roughly-plastered arcade of cylindrical columns and a Norman font. On a ridge on the other side of the valley is Alverdiscott (Allscott) with a much larger fifteenth-century church, in the tower of which hang some Pre-Reformation bells. Bickington is a large modernized village on the main road between Barnstaple and Bideford. There is a much more pleasing air of rusticity about its neighbour

Fremington, though it is a small port, but one does not discover this until one dives down the lane to its station where its quay comes into view. On the road from Fremington to Instow, a good view across the sandy shores of the Taw estuary can be obtained, and Instow itself commands a charming prospect up the Torridge as well as across the river to Appledore. Instow is a clean-looking airy village which sets itself up as a watering-place. On the hill-top between Instow and Bideford is Westleigh, adjoining the woods of Tapely Park. The church has a good tower, built of small stones, and possesses an elaborate roof to its nave, some carved bench-ends, and a few old tiles. In Tapely Park is a conspicuous column erected to the memory of Lieut. Cleveland who, though surviving the famous charge at Balaclava in 1584, fell at Inkerman a month afterwards.

For the tourist the neighbourhood of Bideford means more than the immediate environs of the town. It includes the strip of surf-beaten coast that stretches along the shores of Bideford Bay, and at Hartland Point turns to confront the Atlantic swell. On the high road bordering the coast there is nothing particularly entertaining. It is a bleak, laborious, and monotonous journey all the way from Bideford to Hartland, with a little whitewashed hamlet here and there to relieve the tedium of the tour. 'Hoops' Inn' is a pretty thatched half-way house with some old cannon at its door. But the beauty which the traveller misses on the road will be found along the coast in abundance, for here, ensconced in woods, is Devon's most famous beauty spot, the unique village of Clovelly. A momentary glimpse of it is caught with a feeling of 'half-graspable delight' from the highway, but the traveller can secure a much better view of it by descending the ferny lane and the long-wooded combe that leads down to the shore from Bucks Cross. At the mouth of the glen above a little strand is the hamlet of Bucks Mill. It was once a little port flourishing on the importation of



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CLOVELLY FROM THE HOBBY DRIVE

THE SHARK'S FINS, HARTLAND

lime-stone, which was transformed on the quay into lime for farming purposes, but its kilns are now disused and its sheds turned into lodging-houses. Its situation is quite romantic and its shore is extremely picturesque, commanding as it does a magnificent view of Bideford Bay, Clovelly, and the majestic cliffs of Gallantry Bower beyond. A mile and a half past Bucks Cross is the entrance to the far-famed Hobby Drive, which forms the great scenic approach to Clovelly. The drive is a long fern-fringed descent through ' a dark green wood ', where

> The white sun twinkling like the dawn
> Out of a speckled cloud

makes ' a privacy of glorious light '. It was constructed by Sir J. H. Williams, and though private property is open to the public. The prettiest view in the course of this long umbrageous descent is where the drive makes a sharp elbow round a cleft in the centre of which

> Darting soft from rocks around
> A bubbling runnel joins the sound

of the whispering woods and finally tumbles on to the shore below as a little cataract. This woodland setting does much to enhance the charm of Clovelly, for the woods come close up to the village which forms a stairway down to the sea. Clovelly is certainly unique. Mr. Baring Gould says that ' no one's education is complete who has not seen it '. It is exceedingly pretty and extremely quaint. It is a single street of white-faced cottages stepping with an almost medieval casualness down a cobble-paved declivity to the little harbour below. It is the ' Steepway ' of Dickens and Collins' Christmas story, *A Message from the Sea*. ' There was no road in it, there was no wheeled vehicle in it, there was not a level yard in it. From sea-beach to cliff-top two irregular rows of white

houses rose like a long succession of crooked ladders.' It is worthy of all the admiration it has ever received ; nevertheless it has become the spoilt child of Devonshire. It has been told so often that it is pretty and it has had its picture taken so frequently that it makes a self-conscious and laboured effort to live up to its reputation and is consequently always on show. The ' old Salts ' on the quay, in their irreproachable blue jerseys, regard the admiring visitor with malevolent complacency as if he were enjoying gratuitously a privilege for which he ought to pay. An archway beneath a cottage opens on to the quay, where there is a stone pier built originally by the Careys. It forms a breakwater to the harbour, but the closely-packed fleet of brown-sailed trawlers, which it once sheltered, is now dispersed. At the top of the village is a little enclosure, known as Mount Pleasant, containing the war memorial. Near it is Yellery Gate, giving access to some more woods, through which runs a pathway leading on to the top of Gallantry Bower, a stupendous wall of precipitous cliffs some 390 feet in height. At the commencement of the descent to the village, and standing at the entrance to Clovelly Court, is the church of which Charles Kingsley's father was rector. It is a plain Perpendicular building with a rough round-headed doorway to its porch and a Norman font. The granite pillars of its arcade were quarried on Lundy. It contains a Jacobean pulpit, some mural monuments of the Careys, a tomb in the sanctuary with a Renaissance canopy, and on the floor near it a brass of Walter Carey (1540). Clovelly Court is a modern Gothic mansion superseding the original home of the Careys, which was burnt down in 1796. Enclosed between the two lanes, which lead to the village from the highway, is a remarkable series of earthworks known as the Dykes. The fortifications consist of two concentric ramparts with deep ditches surrounded by a series of outworks, which are also moated but are now much mutilated on the eastern side by the road. To the west of Gallantry Bower is a pretty combe

leading down to a beach at Mouth Mill, where there are some weirdly contorted but picturesque rocks.

Hartland village, which is four miles beyond Clovelly, is a rather dreary-looking collection of houses gathered round an ugly little modern church. It stands on a wide unsheltered slope trending upwards to the brink of the channel. It once enjoyed the unenviable reputation of being the remotest spot in Devonshire, but the advent of the motor-bus has done much to relieve it of that reproach. Though four miles away, it gives its name to Hartland Point, the great outstanding headland that marks the western extremity of the Bristol Channel. Hartland Point is as remarkable in appearance as it is prominent in situation, and seems intended by Nature as a breakwater against the Atlantic surge.

> Exposed to tempestuous seas,
> Scourged by the wind's eternal sway,

it rises 350 feet from the shore and thrusts itself like a gigantic wall for some 300 feet into the surf. It is only thirty feet wide at the top, which is perfectly level, and its flanks are sloping precipices. It is of equal width along its entire length and is partially severed from the shore. With its flat top it looks like an artificially constructed embankment. Among mariners the coast has always had an evil name.

> From Padstow Bay to Hartland Light
> Is a watery grave by day or night.

To warn the sailor of his peril, from a ledge just out of reach of the breakers at the seaward extremity of this 'fatal neck of land running out into rock', 'the rolling eye of a lighthouse' throws its beams for twenty miles over the waste of waters. From the headland itself, where

> The earth and ocean meet
> And multitudinous billows
> Murmur at our feet,

there is little to be seen but ' water, water, everywhere ' with Lundy floating like a derelict hulk on the rim of the ocean. There is a pretty little strand and some precipitous cliffs at Shipload Bay, a little to the east of Hartland Point, but to realize the savage grandeur of this terrible coast the traveller should follow it southwards to Hartland Quay ; but the quay can also be reached by a direct route from the village, the rural amenities of which stand in strange contrast to the scene in which it culminates. This road should in any case be explored, for it presents a charming bit of scenery. Here the bleak treeless expanse around Hartland is broken by a wooded dell ' where through its verdant bosom led a winding brook has made its bed ', and breaks a passage to the sea through one of those characteristic ' mouths ' ' which cut the high table-land of the confines of Devon and Cornwall, and open each through its own gorge of down and rock, towards the boundless Western Ocean '. In this delightful dingle once stood Hartland Abbey, originally founded as a college of secular canons by Gytha, the mother of Harold, and dedicated to St. Nectan, whose intervention had once preserved her husband from shipwreck. Baring-Gould will have it that Gytha's gratitude was misplaced, for he contends that no Celtic saint would ever have lifted a finger to save a Saxon from water or fire ; but Gytha may have thought that the saint deserved some thanks for resisting the temptation to allure the vessel, in Celtic fashion, on to this baleful shore. The abbey was reorganized as an Augustinian monastery in the reign of Henry II. It was dissolved at the Reformation, and the ' Gothic ' mansion, built upon the site of its ruins in 1779, still stands and incorporates a portion of the cloisters. At Stoke, on a ridge above the house among some cottages, is the parochial church, whose lofty tower forms a striking landmark, and bears upon its east face an effigy of St. Nectan. The church, which is popularly known as the ' cathedral of North Devon ', possesses one of the longest screens in the

country, a few carved bench-ends, and a splendid roof to its north-east chapel. In the nave are some old benches with incised ends and a Norman font with sculptured faces on its bowl looking down upon upturned faces on its pedestal. There is a brass of John Dolton (1610) on the floor of the chancel, and on the east wall of the south chapel, amongst some fragments of sculpture preserved from the wreck of the abbey, is another small seventeenth-century brass. A road leads from Stoke to Hartland Quay —a quay no longer—where an hotel and some cottages are built upon the edge of a slope overlooking the shore. From this platform the cruel character of the coast is fully disclosed. It is a scene of the wildest desolation, and looks like the result of some recent convulsion. The cliffs are everywhere precipitous and their strata fantastically contorted, whilst the shore below bristles with jagged masses of rock. One saw-like reef stretches with hideous and menacing persistency into the surf and adds to the horrors of the scene.

Below the quay the coast is buttressed by some bold promontories, but there are few places in Devon where the charm of the sea is less felt than here.

> For though she smile never so lovingly,
> Still the salt taste of death is on her lips,
> And in the mirror of her waves I see
> A darkling presage of the dread eclipse
> When she shall give her dead, the company
> Who loved her and went down to her in ships.

To see the very last of Devonshire, the traveller must proceed still further southwards. After passing the conical peak of St. Catherine's Tor, he will descend at Spokesmouth into a treeless combe, also threaded by a rivulet, which abruptly terminates its career over a precipice. Here

> Like a downward smoke the slender stream
> Along the cliff to fall and fall does seem.

From Spokesmouth the pedestrian can still make his way over the cliffs, and a couple of miles or so to the south he will mount over the fine headland of Henbury Beacon, which, by a double series of small semicircular entrenchments, has been converted into a cliff castle. From Henbury Beacon the land drops steeply to the deep gorge of Welcombe Mouth, a long double-forked valley threaded likewise by a stream and sprinkled with cottages. Welcombe Church is seen crowning the hill at the junction of the two glens. In 1792 a man named Coppinger, the sole survivor of a shipwreck, was washed ashore at Welcombe Mouth. He settled in the neighbourhood, took to smuggling, and earned the name of Cruel Coppinger by his ferocity and fearlessness. A sort of myth was woven round his deeds and his end was mysterious. 'He came,' it was said, 'from a foreign land; he was brought by water, and carried away by wind.' A high ridge separates the Welcombe valley from the partly wooded defile of Marsland Mouth, the boundary between Devon and Cornwall. A sense of complete seclusion pervades this deep and narrow glen where

> Low on the ear the distant billows sound
> And just in view appears their stony bound.

Welcombe village stands on the ridge between the vales, but to reach the church it is necessary to cross one of the forks of the Welcombe valley. The church is a small cruciform edifice with a plastered tower. It contains a curious little screen of rude and unusual design, a Jacobean pulpit and lectern, a reading desk made out of bench-ends, and some carved cornices over the entrance to the transepts. Near the church is a holy well surmounted by a rough shrine.

To complete his survey of this part of the country, the visitor, whilst in the neighbourhood, should make his way from either Hartland or Clovelly into the vale of the Torridge, which rises in Welsford Moor. His first objective

will be the village of Woolfardisworthy (Woolsery), standing in picturesque and elevated isolation among some trees to the south-west of Bucks Cross. The church has a good Norman doorway, some interesting bench-ends, and an effigy. Woolsery is separated from its neighbour Bradworthy by the valley of the Torridge. Though scarcely more than ten miles from its mouth, the Torridge, which here flows through a furzy vale, is seen entering upon its fifty-mile journey to reach its destination. Bradworthy is a pleasant open village, but it has a poor church, the tower of which was rebuilt after its destruction by lightning in 1884. It contains a fine baluster Jacobean pulpit, a low baluster screen, some similarly fashioned altar rails, and some old tiles. If Bradworthy has not a very notable church it once had a very notorious vicar, one William Lang who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century. He was originally a sand man, and having taken Orders became both vicar of Bradworthy and sheriff's bailiff. This duality of offices enabled him to play the part of a wolf in sheep's clothing, for he extorted money by threats of action, turned his parsonage into a tavern and sent his daughter into the pulpit. The Torridge separates West and East Putford, which stand on opposite sides of its valley. West Putford Church is buried in trees on the brink of the vale and has a somewhat similar pulpit to the one at Bradworthy with altar rails to match and some old tiles. Near the entrance to the churchyard is Churchdown House, a modernized Elizabethan manor-house. On Cudgy Moor, near East Putford, a partially reclaimed waste a mile or so to the north, are a number of barrows.

CHAPTER XXIII

TORRINGTON AND THE TORRIDGE

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures ;
Russet lawns and fallows grey
Where the nibbling flocks do stray ;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest :
Meadows trim and daisies,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide,
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees.

MILTON

THE Torridge is one of the few Devonshire rivers which does not owe its origin to either Dartmoor or Exmoor. It is cradled along with the Tamar in the extreme north-west corner of the shire on the borders of Cornwall. Like the Niger (if a county may be compared with a continent) it makes (as has already been said) an enormous circuit to find its way into the sea not many miles away from its source. No one, however, can regret this eccentricity, for the river's indulgence in it leads to the creation of many charming landscapes. Nor is this the only peculiarity about the Torridge. It is a river of pronounced individuality, and the scenery along its course is as unusual as it is beautiful. It differs considerably from the other Devonshire rivers by its fondness for scooping out its banks into steep scarps. So bent is it on prolonging its course that it twists and turns wherever possible and by these sinuosities it hollows out one side of its channel and planes down the other. It is this constant alteration of scarp and slope that gives it its distinguishing character.

At Bideford the visitor sees the wide river as a ' silver sheet ' swept by the constraining influence of the tide, with purposeful directness to its destination. But to see it in its wayward and whimsical moods, leisurely dallying on its way, one must go to Torrington, for Torrington is essentially the town on the Torridge ; it is its connexion with the river that constitutes its distinction. The connexion is, however, a one-sided one, for Torrington adds nothing to the beauty of the Torridge. It does not create it, it does not contribute to it, it merely enjoys it. It is seated high above the river and does not come into the picture at all. From its height it looks down complacently upon the stream, and is proudly conscious of occupying a very enviable situation. It stands some 300 feet above sea-level just where the river exhibits itself most characteristically. In general aspect, the town somewhat resembles South Molton without perhaps the latter's air of roomy and restful dignity. Torrington always seems a little cramped on its giddy and circumscribed platform. It was originally known as Cheping or Market Torington, but it now magniloquently designates itself Great Torrington for fear of being confused with its insignificant neighbour on the opposite side of the valley. But there is nothing imposing about it, though it can boast of some early importance. It is said to have been a market town in Saxon times. The Normans fortified it, but apparently as a private adventure, for its castle was dismantled by royal order in 1228, though it was rehabilitated by Richard de Merton in 1340. In the reign of Edward I, the town had two Parliamentary representatives. During the great Civil War, it achieved some notoriety as one of the last places in Devon to fall into the hands of the Parliamentarians. It had been occupied early in the struggle by the Royalists, and in 1642 and 1643 successive and almost successful attempts were made to dislodge them, but they retained possession of it until 1646 when Fairfax swept Hopton and his garrison out of the town and drove them

across the river. The Puritan victory was marred by an unfortunate incident. The Royalist prisoners were locked in the church which was already stored with their ammunition. By some accident the gunpowder was ignited and the church was blown up, when some 200 men perished.

There is not much to interest the visitor in Torrington itself. The church was rebuilt in 1651 and a tower and spire added in 1830 at the west end to replace a singular erection over the south porch. On the chancel arcade are two defaced niches, and there is a good eighteenth-century pulpit. John Howe, the Puritan divine, was incumbent during the Cromwellian domination, but was ejected in 1663. In South Street there is a Queen Anne house with a carved portal, and at Windy Corner is a four-armed cross mounted on an incongruous pedestal above a well chamber. In the reign of Henry VIII, Torrington was a flourishing centre of the woollen trade, but now its chief industry is glove making. Sir Joshua Reynolds was a frequent visitor, for his sister was a resident, and on one occasion in 1762 he brought Dr. Johnson with him.

As the town is mounted on the edge of a precipitous slope it commands some fine prospects. The most popular viewpoints in the immediate vicinity are Castle Hill and Furzebeam Hill. Castle Hill, which is still crowned with some remnants of the ' bleak battlements ' of its fortress, overhangs the gorge of the Torridge and is laid out in walks. On the side of the hill is an ugly Waterloo memorial, but the view is inspiring. ' Here gaping cliff, there moss-grown plain is seen.' The town has been named ' Little Jerusalem ' from a fancied resemblance which this aspect of it bears to the approach to the Holy City over the Mount of Olives. Furzebeam Hill is a prominent gorse-clad eminence projecting into the Torridge valley at the other end of the town and separated from it by another narrow but deep valley. The view from the summit is worthy of comparison with that from the Wind Cliff near Chepstow, for at its

foot the serpentine river coils gracefully beneath ' cragg'd cliffs and hills and wasteful woods '.

There are several interesting places in the neighbourhood of Torrington, and the river is conveniently spanned for reaching them by no less than three bridges. In the little water-side hamlet of Taddiport, there is a small church which was once the chapel of a leper hospital. On the Holsworthy road, which crosses a prettily-wooded glen traversed by the railway, is Langtree. Langtree church has a carved Jacobean pulpit and a pair of contemporary sanctuary chairs. At the village of Stibbs Cross, the road unites with that from Bideford and the Dartmoor hills come conspicuously into view. A mile or so to the left of the highway is Newton St. Petrock Church, standing almost alone. It contains some good bench-ends and a carved pulpit entered from a passage in the wall. The font is very rude and at its base are some old tiles. In the tower hang some seventeenth-century bells. In a field to the west of the church is a puddle beneath an ash tree, which was once a holy well, whilst to the east on a conical hill overhanging a feeder of the Torridge is an earthwork consisting of a crater-like mound and a small base court and known as Durpley Castle. The village lies in the valley of the Torridge below, where the scenery has lost its harsher contrasts and takes to itself a sylvan softness, for ' the rutty banks which the river hem ' are overhung with woods. By crossing the river at Woodford Bridge and by taking a path through the woods, the traveller can ascend to Abbots Bickington, where there is a small thirteenth-century church on the top of the hill, which has some old glass in its east window and some old tiles in its sanctuary. From Abbots Bickington a lane leads down into the Torridge valley again and a bridge carries it over the river to Bulkworthy. Just beyond the bridge an impressive glimpse is caught of ' the rough dark-skirted wilderness ' of Dartmoor filling the end of the valley. Bulkworthy Church, on the hill-side, has only a belfry, and the south

porch is made out of the south aisle. The fine screen, which once adorned the church, was removed and broken up ' to save the trouble of cleaning '. The church was built by Sir William Hankeford, Chief Justice of the King's Bench from 1413–22. He succeeded Chief Justice Gascoygne, who is alleged to have been dismissed by Henry V on his accession for having committed him to prison in his mad-cap days. But the story of the prince's committal and Shakespeare's representation of the judge's pardon are fictions. About a couple of miles south-west of Frithelstock Stone, on the Bideford road, in a wood overhanging a vale threaded by a tributary of the Yeo, is Henbury ' Castle ', a prehistoric encampment with a double rampart temporarily occupied by the Royalists on their retreat into Cornwall after their expulsion from Torrington. Frithelstock Church stands on a ledge above a forked valley to the north-east of Frithelstock Stone. It contains a curiously shaped font and a few carved bench-ends. The chief antiquarian interest of Frithelstock is, however, the ruins of its Augustinian Priory, founded in 1220 by Robert Beauchamp, which stands in a field at the north-east corner of the churchyard. The ruins consist of a portion of the minster. The east end has gone, but the west gable still stands and contains three fine lancet windows. There is another lancet in the north wall and in the south wall is an archway. A farm occupies the site of the domestic buildings. Frithelstock's neighbour, Monkleigh, stands on the high plateau over which the Holsworthy and Bideford road runs. The church retains a portion of its screen in the south aisle which is the most interesting part of the building, for it has a carved wooden priest's doorway and contains some old bench-ends and the tomb of Chief Justice Hankeford, from which the brasses have been stripped. Over the vestry is the brass of James Coffin (1566), and in the south aisle are some seventeenth-century mural monuments. In a wood, between Monkleigh and Buckland Brewer, is a circular encampment. Near the Bideford

road but hidden in the foliage of its fine park is Annery, overlooking the valley of the Torridge. Annery was the birthplace of Bishop Stapledon, and was also in the later years of his life the residence of Sir William Hankeford. Of Hankeford's death, Prince tells a tragic story. Being old and weary of life he devised a means of 'shuffling off this mortal coil', which was worthy of the proverbial subtlety of the legal mind. He tricked his keeper into shooting him under the impression that he was a poacher. Beyond Annery, the Bideford road runs over a promontory between the Torridge and the Yeo and commands a very pretty view of the valley of the latter. On the slope of the hill round which the Torridge winds itself is the small church of Landcross (originally Lancarse), surmounted by an ugly slate-shingled belfry. It contains some bench-ends and a Norman font recessed into the west wall. General Monk, who was baptized in the church in 1608, is said to have been born in the parish. By descending into the valley of the Torridge, the traveller can pursue his way

> Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
> Of the wild babbling river,

to Wear Giffard, a favourite resort of Bideford and Torrington excursionists on account of its strawberry gardens. It occupies a picturesque situation on the right bank of the river, and has an interesting church and a charming hall adjoining one another. The church has a good roof and contains some carved bench-ends and the effigies of a lady with a coronet, and a cross-legged knight. They are supposed to represent Sir Walter Giffard (1243) and his wife. The Hall is just below the churchyard and has an embattled gatehouse now deprived of its adjoining walls, which were destroyed in the Civil War. The Hall is small and dates from the fifteenth century. It is panelled and contains a gallery and a fine hammer-beam roof. It was built, it is believed, by the son of Sir John Fortescue, the famous lawyer who was born at Wear Giffard in 1394.

Sir John was an enthusiastic Lancastrian and followed Queen Margaret into exile. On his capture subsequently at the battle of Tewkesbury, he made his peace with Edward IV by disavowing the treatises he had written in support of the Lancastrian claims. Huntshaw Church, which stands on the top of a ridge on the other side of an intervening valley, has a curious stoup in its porch, and some remnants of ancient glass in the vestry window. Carved on the capital of one of its piers is the figure of an acrobat.

The Hatherleigh road is of less interest, but a ramble along it will complete the visitor's exploration of the Torridge valley. Standing on the top of a hill on the other side of the valley opposite the town is Little Torrington, a cluster of cottages round a church with a gaunt tower. Three miles south of Little Torrington, and standing back from the high road, is Potheridge, now a farm but once the home of General Monk. Very little of the old house remains, for it was rebuilt by him in 1670 and again partially demolished in the eighteenth century. Monk, whose policy seems to have been ' safety first ' refused the supreme power on the collapse of Richard Cromwell's régime, ' holding it greater honour to be an honest subject than a great usurper ', but he expected a reward for his self-restraint, and received it. After his *volte-face* in 1660 he was created Earl of Torrington and Duke of Abermarle. Bordering the main Hatherleigh road, as it descends towards a vale opening upon the valley of the Torridge, is the pleasant-looking village of Merton, with a comely church facing an open space. It contains a little old glass and a Jacobean font cover. South of Merton, on a hill-side, is Petrockstow, where there is a pretty group of thatched cottages. The church has two differently fashioned arcades, a pillar piscina, a crocketed font cover, and a good Jacobean altar table. On the north wall of the nave is a long brass of Henry Rolle (1591) and his wife, with an inscription below in two different kinds of

lettering. From Petrockstow the traveller can reach the Torridge by a road past the entrance to Heanton Satchville Park. In the park is Huish Church, which, with the exception of its tower, was rebuilt in 1875 by G. E. Street. In the churchyard is the lichen-covered stepped base of the old cross. The bridge across the Torridge commands a pretty view, much disfigured, however, by quarrying operations. The road, on emerging from the valley, joins the Okehampton road, and by it the traveller can return to Torrington. There is not very much to engage his attention in the two villages through which he passes on the way back ; they both stand on a high and unadorned stretch of road, and are somewhat commonplace in character. In Dolton Church there is a pre-Norman font ornamented with interlaced work. Beaford Church has a shingled spire on its north side. St. Giles-in-the-Wood stands on the borders of the lofty groves of Stevenstone Park. Stevenstone House was rebuilt in 1872, and was formerly the seat of the Rolle family. Pitt's staunch supporter, John Rolle, was, in 1796, created Baron Rolle. He was the hero of the *Rolliad*, and his unfortunate slip on the steps of the throne at Queen Victoria's coronation set Thomas Ingoldsby rocking with laughter.

> Thus the trumpets playing and the organ braying,
> And sweet trombones with their silver tunes,
> But Lord Rolle was rolling—'twas mighty consoling
> To think that his lordship did not break his bones.

St. Giles Church contains on its floor some brasses of the Rolles (1570), the Pollards (1430), and Risdon (1610), and beneath its tower is a monument with an effigy of Thomas Chafe, the brother-in-law of Tristram Risdon, the historian, who is himself buried in the church.

The visitor can see a little more of the Torridge if he removes his quarters to Hatherleigh. Though Hatherleigh is not actually on the Torridge, the river does not flow far away. Hatherleigh is a quaint, primitive-looking collection

of cobb cottages lying on a slope of the valley of Lew, which flows into the Torridge. Its church has a slate spire and contains some bench-ends, a Jacobean pew, and a reading-desk and pulpit made apparently out of the remnants of the screen. Outside the town is an old cross, and to the north of the town is an extensive common commanding a wide view over the country-side. It is said to have been bestowed upon the indigent of the town by John of Gaunt in the usual rigmarole ascribed to him :

> I, John of Gaunt, do give and do grant
> Hatherleigh Moor unto Hatherleigh poor
> For this time and for ever more.

But the gift horse was, as usual, looked well in the mouth, for the sterility of the benefaction passed into a proverb : 'As poor as Hatherleigh Moor.' On its summit is an obelisk bearing a bas-relief to Colonel Morris, who fell at Balaclava. Below the monument, in a dingle, is a holy well (St. John's), and another holy well (St. Mary's) is in a wood beside the Sheepwash road beyond the station. Standing on a hill above the Holsworthy road is the church of High Hampton, whose churchyard commands an extensive prospect. The church preserves a good Norman doorway, but its original arcade has been replaced by some pillars. The village lies below on the Holsworthy road. Standing picturesquely on the other side of the Torridge is Sheepwash, a pleasant village of white cottages ranged round a large square. From Sheepwash the visitor can reach the Torridge again by proceeding to Black Torrington which is strikingly mounted on a hill-top above the river. Shebbear, another high-standing, though not very attractive, village, has been chosen as the site of a large Methodist college. Its church has a Norman doorway, and a rude arcade similar to the one at Tawstock, a Jacobean pulpit, and a well-executed effigy of a lady of the fifteenth century. From Shebbear there is a road through the beautiful wooded demesne of Buckland Filbeigh. The church is in

the park adjoining Buckland House and faces a small lake. The luxuriant woods of Buckland are succeeded by a sterile moor, and a long lane bordering the common leads back to Hatherleigh. At Ash it strikes the road from Torrington and descends into the valley of the Torridge at Hele bridge. Visible from the junction of the two roads is the tower of Meeth Church, which has a plain Norman doorway.

There is another ramble awaiting the visitor along the other side of the Torridge. By crossing Hatherleigh Moor he can make his way directly to Iddesleigh (Idd-es-leigh), or reach it through Monk Okehampton. There is nothing particular at Monk Okehampton to draw him out of his way, unless he desires to renew his acquaintance with the West Okement, above which the village stands. But he would have to cross the river in any case, for it flows into the Torridge between Hatherleigh and Iddesleigh, though it makes perhaps a prettier picture with the village behind it than it does coursing through the meadows. Iddesleigh stands out boldly on the top of a hill and looks down upon a pleasant valley. It is a small place, but provides the Northcote family with a title. The church possesses a side screen, a Jacobean pulpit and font cover, and the thirteenth-century effigy of a cross-legged knight, supposed to be one of the Sullys who in the reign of Edward I owned ' a faire house and two parks ' in the locality. Beyond Iddesleigh, and standing on a similar level, but not so boldly placed, is the secluded and almost solitary church of Dowland, which has some carved bench-ends and an arcade with wooden piers. In the churchyard is the broken shaft of a cross, and there is the base of another cross in the road near the entrance to the graveyard.

CHAPTER XXIV

ON THE CORNISH BORDER

As travellers oft look back at eve
When eastward darkly going,
To gaze upon that light they leave
Still faint behind them glowing—
So when the close of pleasure's day
To gloom hath near consigned us,
We turn to catch one fading ray
Of joy that's left behind us.

T. Moore

BEFORE the traveller turns his back upon Devonshire there is still one region which remains to be seen. It is the district round Holsworthy. It is not Devon at its best and brightest, but it is still Devon, verdant and varied —Devon making an expiring effort to end not altogether ingloriously. Comparatively tame though it is, it holds the promise of some of that lively beauty which has made other regions famous, for it is, if not the cradle, at least the nursery, of the infant Tamar, and of all Devonshire rivers the Tamar presents perhaps the grandest views. They have the great quality of breadth and have for a background the imposing contours of the western highlands. Dartmoor and the Cornish hills stand defiantly facing one another across the dividing gulf like estranged members of the same family. Nature intended the Tamar to form a frontier between Devon and the Duchy as scientifically satisfactory as it is aesthetically engaging, for the river runs more or less in a straight line from sea to sea. But the natural frontier has not been strictly adhered to. Where the Tamar on the north falls short of completely severing shire from shire, the boundary has gone astray by making that short-cut westwards to the ocean which has given to

Devon the Hartland peninsula. And again, where the river approaches Launceston the frontier makes a sudden and eccentric leap across the water and is only brought back again to its normal line when it encounters the Tamar's tributary, the Attery. Of the glories of the Tamar as a ' full-fed river ' the traveller has already seen much in passing. He has also penetrated into the solitary and inhospitable region where the Tamar ceases to flow, but he has not yet explored the district where it begins to gather its strength for its future scenic achievements. To make acquaintance with this he will have to sojourn for a while at Holsworthy.

Holsworthy is very much what other small Devonshire county towns are—a combination of urban conventionality and rural simplicity. It is an agricultural centre standing high on a plateau furrowed by valleys, and is a quiet and agreeable little place, lively and dull by turns, and with only a slight savour of antiquity about it.

In the Civil War the Royalist garrison which occupied it was ejected by Fairfax after his capture of Torrington. It is built round a central market place and possesses a large church, but there is little in its aspect to challenge the curiosity of the visitor. The church has a fine tower of the usual local type, a heavy fourteenth-century arcade, and for a doorway the jambs of the chancel arch of the earlier Norman church. It possesses an organ built by Renatus Harris for Chelsea Church, and in the south porch is a rude sculpture of the Agnus Dei, and what appears to be the remnants of an early stoup. In the vicarage grounds is a labyrinth of beech trees—' a mighty maze but not without a plan '—carried out by Lord Stanhope in 1821 and covering half an acre. Holsworthy has a large annual fair, but the town is chiefly known to tourists as a halting-place in the last stage of a journey to Bude.

It is along the road to Bude that the visitor will have at first to travel to reach some of the neighbouring border villages. Standing high on a ridge near the road-side above

the Tamar valley is Pancras Week—a few scattered cottages leading up to a church girdled by a belt of trees from which its tower protrudes conspicuously. The building has a passage squint containing the rood loft doorway, the indications of a Norman arch in the north wall of the chancel, and a Jacobean pulpit. In the churchyard is the stepped base of a cross. To the south of Pancras Week is Bridgrule Church, with its village below sitting astride of the Tamar. It is, however, a tamer Tamar than one expects to find, but the river is here still in its infancy. Pyworthy, to the east, is a poor little place, but it has a rather unusual church. It is a thirteenth-century structure possessed of a clerestory and a tall gaunt tower, which, though almost entirely unbuttressed, achieves stability by a slight set-back at each of its stages. The interior retains a triple sedilia, a thirteenth-century font, and the parish stocks. To reach Holsworthy it is necessary to descend into the deep valley of the Deer, a confluent of the Tamar, which at the entrance to the town is crossed by a picturesque eight-arched railway viaduct.

The visitor to Holsworthy can see something more of the Tamar by following the Launcester road as far as Clawton, through which the Claw, another of the Tamar's tributaries, flows. Clawton Church stands on a hill above the river and has an arcade differing at the east end in material as well as design. In the north aisle is a mural monument with an effigy to Christopher Oldmond (1631). Beyond Clawton a branch road runs from the highway to Tetcott, standing above the confluence of the Claw and the Tamar. A park which has the reputation of being haunted adjoins the village. One of the Arscotts of Tetcott House, a mighty hunter in his day, instead of resting quietly in the family vault in the neighbouring church, blows his horn on stormy nights and sweeps through the park with a ghostly pack of hounds in full cry.

> For Arscott of Tetcott loves hunting so well
> That he breaks for the pastime from heaven—or hell.

The old residence of the Arscotts still stands near the church, but the Queen Anne mansion which was intended to supersede it has been demolished. The church, which is in the park, is not of very great antiquarian interest. It contains a few carved bench-ends, and in the south transept is a pew with pierced panels surmounted at each end with the figures of animals bearing shields of arms. From Tetcott Church a lane leads to Luffincott. There is no village at Luffincott, but there are a few scattered cottages and a church entered from a farm-yard and standing above the Tamar. By crossing the field behind the farm the river, which here winds through a wooded valley, can be reached, but it is only a case of 'a sward sloping down to a brawling brook' and of 'the underwood and trees beginning again'. A lane from Luffincott crosses the Launceston road to Ashwater. On one side of the highway a glimpse may be caught of the sovereign heights of Cornwall, Brown Willy and Roughtor; and on the other side the supreme Devonshire summits, Yes Tor and High Willhays, come momentarily into view. Ashwater is a pleasant village served by the railway. Part of it stands near its church and part of it lies grouped round the railway station in the valley of the Carey below. The church has a pleasing tower with a pinnacled stair turret. Its chief features are, however, its striking Norman font and its fine roofs, the one covering the nave being of exceptional span. The modern carved pulpit is said to be the work of a local craftsman. The arcade is singular, for in it fourteenth-century octagonal piers alternate with slenderer Perpendicular shafts. In a recess in the north wall are the fifteenth-century effigies of Sir Thomas Carminow (in plate armour) and his wife, possibly placed here by their daughter, Lady Carew, whose arms appear in the east window of the aisle. To the north of Ashwater, a mile and a half from the railway junction, is Halwill, a scattered village gay in the early summer with rhododendrons. There is an ancient Latin cross surmounting a wall near the entrance to

the church, and in the churchyard the base of another cross. The church, though picturesquely posed, has been rebuilt. On the road back to Holsworthy, which crosses Claw Moor, about three miles from the town, is the elevated but secluded little church of Hollacombe with a saddleback tower and a Norman doorway.

There is a string of villages to the north and north-east of Holsworthy which should be visited if the traveller desires to complete his knowledge of the neighbourhood, though they have more connexion with the Torridge than the Tamar, and lie round about the Torrington road. Almost six miles north of the town is Sutcombe, the most interesting of the group. It stands above the valley of the Waldon and its surroundings are well timbered and pleasantly diversified, for though the Waldon is but a tributary of the Torridge, it has a small family of confluents of its own which prattle through leafy glens. Sutcombe Church, which has a plain Norman doorway, preserves the base of its screen, a parclose, a finely-carved Jacobean pulpit, and a number of richly worked bench-ends. The nave is largely paved with old tiles ; there is some ancient glass in the tracery of the south-east window. East of Sutcombe, and standing away from the Torrington road, is Milton Damerel, whose church, dedicated to the Seven Maccabees, possesses a Caroline pulpit, some old tiles, and an old door retaining its original ironwork. Fragments of the original screen appear to have been worked up into the altar table. By crossing a tributary brook, and the Waldon itself, the traveller will come upon Thornbury Church, perched high enough to command some pleasing views of the surrounding country-side, which are, however, obscured by the leafy screen through which the church looks at the landscape. It is rather a solitary building but of some interest, for it possesses a bold Norman doorway and in its north-east chapel is a particularly fine but sadly disfigured alabaster monument of Sir John Speccott (1641) and his wife. Below Thornbury is Bradford, which stands

near the Torridge. Bradford too is small and secluded, a mere cluster of cottages, with an ancient cross by the roadside. The church here likewise preserves a good Norman doorway, in the interior splay of which has been inserted a square stoup. Within the church are its original altar slab and some old tiles.

At the neighbouring village of Cookbury, standing amongst some trees on a knoll above a frolicsome little brook, is a church with an ugly little tower crowned by a pyramidal cap, and made still less attractive by the timber inserted in its belfry. Curiously enough, from within the tower makes quite a pretty little recess. Within the church are a Jacobean pulpit with open panels, some heavy uncarved benches, some old tiles, and an altar made out of the dismembered screen. About a mile to the south of Cookbury is Dunsland House, a Tudor mansion, enlarged in 1609 and again still more extensively half a century later. The interior is of considerable interest and contains a fine chimney-piece and some elaborately decorated ceilings. Within the eccentric loop which the county border makes on its approach to Launceston are North Petherwin and Werrington. North Petherwin Church has some fine Norman piers, some Jacobean altar rails under the tower, and some good ironwork on its doorway. Werrington Church was built in 1743 and adjoins Werrington Park. The old house, built by Sir William Morice, Charles II's Secretary of State, is at the back of the present mansion.

On reaching the Cornish border the traveller comes necessarily to the end of his rambles in Devon. They will at any rate have furnished him with many delightful experiences in passing and will have stored his mind with many pleasant if

> Shadowy recollections,
> Which be they what they may
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day.

He will probably conclude that the county has not in any

way belied its enviable reputation and that there are few districts in ' England's green and pleasant land ' which are so capable by their consistent yet constantly varied beauty of sustaining the tourist's interest from end to end.

Happy Devon, richly dowered
With a loveliness benign.
Lavish Nature seldom showered
Gifts so manifold as thine.
Not of earth each project seems
But like pictures wrought in dreams.

Gentle hills superbly pencilled,
Velvet woods whose patined aisles
Make a pathway deftly stencilled
By the leaves, whose shade beguiles
Travellers with sunshine sated
And blithe songsters newly mated.

Sportive Pan with pipe goes fluting
Through the woods and o'er the lea,
Fauns and nymphs, his train recruiting,
Make a jocund company,
And the trees all wave their tresses
Touselled by the winds caresses.

Fair are other shires, but never
Elsewhere are such vistas seen ;
Green clefts ragged mountains sever,
Furtive streamlets flash between.
Darts each stream like lover's glance
Wherein joy and laughter dance.

Rocky dells and meads conspiring
Make a rural paradise,
Villages in nooks retiring
From whose midst grey churches rise.
Lichened farms and hoary towers,
Cottages enshrined in flowers.

Round thy dimpled cliff-girt shorelands
Shines the blue sea's far-flung rim,
On thy purple-tinted moorlands
Granite spires rise stark and dim.

Misty peaks with sunlight kissed,
Glassy seas like amethyst.

All thy strands are strewn with ocean's
  Glittering stores of burnished gold,
And thy cliffs the surges motions
  With an em'rald robe enfold,
Robe from which the wild winds hurl
Opalescent beads of pearl.

On thy features smiling brightly
  Sometimes sits the storm-fiend's frown,
Lowing skies, like ink unsightly,
  Foaming torrents rattling down.
Trembling cliffs the surf beats under,
Yawning chasms voicing thunder.

Yet in storm or shine thou reignest
  Like a queen enthroned in glory.
From thy past renown thou gainest,
  Fame's great trumpet peals thy story.
England's shores enjoy their ease,
For thy sons have ruled the seas.

Fleeting visions of thy beauty
  Will, till mem'ry lose its sway,
Come at times to cheer the duty
  Of a sunless after-day.
Visions of thy landscape tender
Set in all their summer splendour.

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